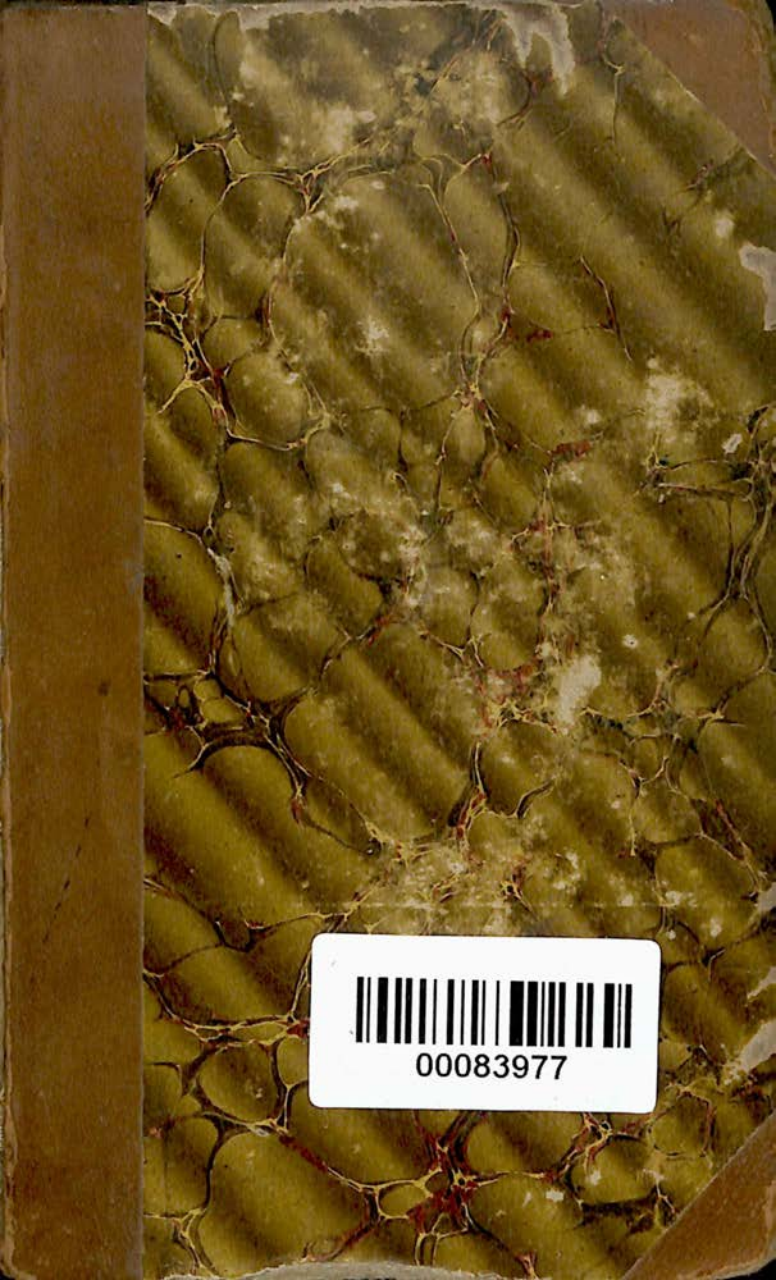
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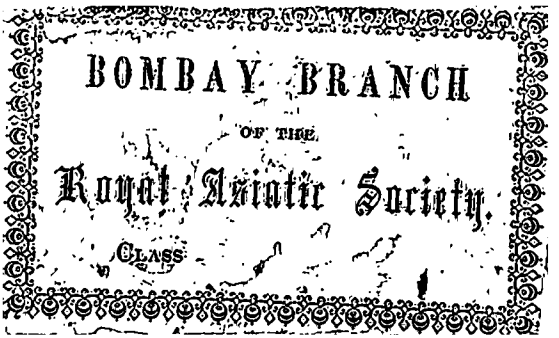

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JOURNEY

FROM BUENOS AYRES,

THROUGH THE PROVINCES OF

CORDOVA, TUCUMAN, AND SALTA, TO POTOSI,

THENCE

BY THE DESERTS OF CARANJA TO ARICA,

AND SUBSEQUENTLY,

TO SANTIAGO DE CHILI AND COQUIMBO,

UNDERTAKEN ON BEHALF OF THE

Chilian and Perubian Mining Association,

83977

IN THE YEARS 1825-26.

BY CAPTAIN ANDREWS,

LATE COMMANDER OF H. C. S. WINDHAM.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1827.

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TO THE

RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING,

FIRST COMMISSIONER OF THE TREASURY,

AND

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER,

AS A MARK OF RESPECT

FOR THE

POLITICAL TALENT AND FORESIGHT

WHICH

OPENED TO GREAT BRITAIN,

THE FULL

COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES OF THE NEWLY

ENFRANCHISED STATES OF SOUTH AMERICA,

BY THE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE

THESE VOLUMES, HOWEVER UNWORTHY,

ARE INSCRIBED, BY

HIS VERY OBEDIENT,

HUMBLE SERVANT,

JOSEPH ANDREWS.

Croom's Hill, Greenwich,

July 10, 1827

PREFACE.

THE reduction of one species of stock in the year 1824, together with the apprehensions of stock holders in general, that every description of the public securities would share the same fate, carried an overwhelming quantity of unemployed wealth into the market. Joint stock companies now sprang up in the natural anxiety to find new and profitable modes of investment, and many of these were of the most novel and absurd character. At that moment the New World appeared to offer an inexhaustible field of employment for the teeming excess of capital. Numerous mining associations were formed among a variety of other schemes

for the above-mentioned purpose. Long, however, before a return from any of these undertakings could possibly be received, an announcement appeared in the newspapers, that a custom house entry of bars of the precious metals from one of the newly established mining companies had taken place. The public, without inquiring into facts, conceived that South America was the scene to realize all their golden dreams. The scrip of the company to which these riches belonged, mounted five or six hundred per cent., while that of others, catching the excitement, became proportionably elevated. It was not considered that this extravagant increase of value was ephemeral, until a panic and rapid depression followed, attended with ruin in every form: The same irrational effects awaited the decline of these schemes, which had signalized their formation; thus the bubble company and that of sterling value fell together, and were alike denounced as unprincipled. The commercial relations of Great Britain with the New World, which must naturally be affected in their success or fall, were never for a moment

considered; a general disregard of consequences being a feature of the time.

If these various mining companies should produce no other benefit, they at least contributed to make known to us geographically the interior of a vast continent, its vegetable and mineral productions, and the manners and habits of a people with whom it had been the policy of their former masters we should be, if at all, but superficially acquainted.

The writer of the present volumes is, nevertheless, of opinion that this is not all the benefit which this country will eventually derive from the recent associations. He ventures to differ from those who decry *in toto* the attempts made to employ British capital in restoring to South America the power of producing her great staple return of the precious metals. He affirms that the efforts lately made, failed, not from any deficiency of mining produce in the country, for it notoriously abounds; not from any miscalculations of the framers of the more respectable associations (who, in the instance in which the writer was concerned, lost every shilling they advanced), but entirely through

mismanagement in carrying the object itself into effect.

It must be allowed, that while there was a great deficiency of judgment displayed, in the organization and constitution of these companies, nothing before in our commercial annals could be found, comparable to the un-English-like way in which some of them were suffered to become defunct, at a time when, despite of errors committed, they might be said to be fairly established; and further, whatever were the causes of the late panic, or the history of the circumstances attending the dissolution of so many joint stock companies, (and volumes might be filled with their enumeration,) it will be admitted that the public deserved no small share of blame, for its precipitation and credulity, of which, in so many instances, designing knaves took advantage. This, however, is no reason why the principle of such undertakings should be contemned, for if so, the public funds of the nation may be assailed with equal justice.

So differently does the present writer think on this subject from many others, and so

much does he feel supported in his opinions by local observation, that he is sure if a private company of a dozen capitalists were even now to procure the grants and cater up the materials of either of the demised *bona fide* associations, going to work in a frugal and rational manner, an ample remuneration would be the result. No reasonable man, who has any acquaintance with South America, would dream of realizing in a few months cargoes of gold and silver in return for the mere advance of a first instalment on a million capital. Yet this absurd expectation was entertained by a majority of the shareholders in the recent companies!

Such was the precipitation and covetousness of gain indulged at home, that the vast extent of difficult country to be explored in search of mines, was, during the late mania, never calculated upon, nor the least anticipation of the rapid political changes occurring in South America, provided for. One of these, in the writer's instance, threw open in an instant the noblest mines in the country, and, as it were, hermetically sealed the worst. Every thing was measured by the home standard. It was ex-

pected that journies, twice or thrice the distance from Johnny Groats to the Land's End, among the very Andes themselves, should be taken with mail-coach rapidity. The managers of companies, acting under the influence of the popular phrenzy, were forced into enormous premature outlays before the result of their agents' first operations could reach them. The mines of South America were to be got into full play, and profits a thousand-fold returned, in the short space of time it took cupidity to imagine them! Is it astonishing so many of them failed—and not equally astonishing that any continue to exist?

It is not the fault of the war-exhausted South American, nor of his rich but deserted mines, that Great Britain is not now reaping the fruit of the sums her speculators lavished in the noble effort to take the place of the old Spanish capitalists in that country, thereby indissolubly uniting to the emancipated states, in bonds of mutual self-interest, the merchant, manufacturer, and ship-owner of this country. It is rather to be attributed to mismanagement of more than one description. The golden column was in our

reach—the fulcrum and lever in our possession; but we were too deficient in our usual skill, experience, and spirit, to raise it upon its pedestal.

The departure for South America of the compiler of the present journal (for it is little more) was very sudden. He had spent but a few hours with two or three of the highly respectable individuals who originally formed the scheme of the Chilian and Peruvian Mining Association, and left London at a day's notice. At 4 P. M. the written instructions of the Company were received, and at seven he was in the mail for Falmouth, whence he sailed for Buenos Ayres; and after an agreeable passage, in company with the commissioners of two other associations, whose views were directed to the same field, arrived on the 26th of March, 1825. He must also add that he was himself a considerable shareholder in the company.

It is proper to premise that when he left England for America, there was the strongest impression on the public mind, that the various agents of the companies could not obtain sufficient mines for the capitals announced in their several

programmes, which had the effect of creating a rivalship among them, calculated to defeat each other's views. It promoted, indeed, such an inordinate rise in the price of the article, that mere names of mines were grasped at with an avidity which overlooked every regard to intrinsic merit or value.

A few days sufficed after the writer's arrival at Buenos Ayres, to convince him that more than ordinary caution and circumspection were necessary, as well with regard to gaining the objects of his mission, as to the point where he should direct his first operations. He found the political and mining state of the country exactly the reverse of that contemplated on his leaving England. Chili, then the only apparent opening, was now in a state of political effervescence, with her best mines forestalled. By the refusal of the Government of Rioja to accord with the engagements entered into by Mr. Rivadavia in Great Britain, the famed "mineral" of Famatina lay open. The other provinces of the Rio de la Plata were free, and uncompromised, as regarded any exclusive privilege or grant. By the battle of Ayacucho, and

the subsequent overthrow of the last remaining force in Upper Peru, under General Olañeta, the superior mining Provinces of Potosi, Porco, Lipes, Chayanta, Chichas, and Atacama, offered their vast resources, and all within the company's express locality. To these considerations on the writer's mind, another suggested itself, of no small importance. He found from Mr. Miers, who had recently come from Chili to Buenos Ayres, that one of the gentlemen deputed to act with him for the company's interests in Chili, and the only individual of the two, in whose liberality and mineralogical talent he could confide, had been for some time engaged in consolidating the mines of that country for an opposing interest.

The writer thinks it may not be irrelevant here to state, that he had passed several years in South America prior to his present visit. He consequently knew something of the habits and customs of the people, with whom he went to transact business; and, what was perhaps equally important to his employers, he was acquainted with the character and capabilities of the joint resident agents with whom he was to correspond,

in Santiago de Chili. He possessed no definite power to appoint another agent in the place of him whom he had found, on arrival at Buenos Ayres, to be engaged for another interest. In consequence, one of these agents deemed himself unauthorised to act in a separate capacity; but had the writer taken upon himself to nominate another, circumstances have since shewn he would have incurred serious personal liability. Well it was for him, as results have shewn, that he kept out of the stream of Chilian competition. He was, moreover, no stranger, from past experience abroad, to the sums that might be lavished, and expences incurred through the medium of irresponsible agents, in bargains, which, however disadvantageous they might ultimately prove to proprietors, would rebate nothing from the amount of their commissions. He presumed it unwise, especially in the then critical state of mining relations in Chili, to subject himself to either of the alternatives before him: namely, the burthen of the heavy pecuniary responsibility of money engagements, attended with a great sacrifice, or a submission to the reproach of having relinquished the apparently

good things which might offer through the connections and zeal of an agent. Finally, the writer concluded that the undoubted talents and zeal of a company's agent in Santiago de Chili, might fully as well be employed for their interest upon his own responsibility as upon that of an individual sent by the company from England to engage mines in their behalf. The writer was aware of the uneasiness which his decision would create in the mind of the agent in question; he even anticipated censure and reproach, as a consequence of acting in the way circumstances told him, and events subsequently proved were best; but he scarcely calculated on the denouncement of his conduct before it was tried by its good or ill results, still less that the individual in question would have written to the directors in a way to induce such a disapproval of the writer's proceedings, as might possibly occasion a more pliant or less scrupulous individual to be sent to succeed him. In what degree this operated to the writer's disadvantage in the minds of the directors, is now of no moment; but he has the satisfaction to reflect that he was instrumental, as long as he could be

so, in opposing needless expenditure of every kind. His idea from the first was that of securing a sufficient and profitable field for the employment of the association's capital, and having accomplished this, to proceed home, with the contracts he had made, in order to confer with the directors as to the most efficacious means of carrying them into effect; little thinking that the Directors would be impelled by the spirit of the times to embark an expensive establishment of miners and implements before they heard from him. This, more especially, since with reference to an advertisement by a rival Company, he pointed out the inevitable losses which must be the result of such premature proceedings.

In conformity with his instructions, he furnished his son with such power as he conceived might benefit the company, without compromising its capital; and gave him orders, after he had conferred with its agent at Santiago de Chili, to proceed without delay by the Pacific, with a view to Peruvian operations. There he was to enter into preliminary agreements for the mines of Huantajaya, Tarapaca, and Puno, in

case he should arrive first in those districts. Having thus completed his arrangements at Buenos Ayres, the writer proceeded to Cordova, with a fair prospect of obtaining the copper mines of that district, with views also to the celebrated hills of the Rioja. At Cordova he remained, as an intermediate position, enabling him to act on any point, as circumstances might justify, until the arrival of an expected associate, with scientific assistants, by the following packet, and he employed the interim in negociating with the government and individuals at Cordova, for the above objects. At length he received letters from his son, whom he had sent to Chili, and from the company's agent there, extremely satisfactory, in as far as relieving any previous doubts that existed in his mind, touching the efficacy of his diverging course, and decisive in fact of the propriety of his procedure without further delay into Peru. On his route from Cordova, he availed himself of such provisional engagements at Tucuman and Salta as he deemed beneficial to the company, in the event of their embarking as largely in mining transactions, as the spirit of the times, when he quitted England, justified him in expecting.

At Potosi, his labours were cut short by the reception of a letter from the secretary of the association, informing him, to his surprise, of an establishment of miners, smelters, &c. &c. being on their way to Chili. He immediately started for Arica, whence having embarked, he arrived at Coquimbo in time to aid the first practical operations of the company in that quarter.

The reader will think enough has been said here of the writer's connection with the company for which he was recently engaged. He owed it to himself, however, not to say less upon many accounts. He will only now allude to the hasty and superficial view taken of American mining, by some who were despatched to negociate on the subject by public companies. The utter ignorance of many of these persons of mining itself, the country, language, and resources for opening old works, or commencing new, kept pace with the wild expectations of instant profit indulged by speculators at home, and contributed equally to many of the losses which have been sustained. The writer does not hesitate to affirm, that the mode generally adopted, was the most erroneous that could have been followed. He asserts, from the best experience, that not

the miner, but the capital was wanted, to replace that which the natives had lost; and this capital, seasonably introducing the improvements of European science in mechanics and the treatment of the ores, included all that was required. The European miner is, in fact, out of his element in South America. He can neither work as hard as the native, nor does he understand his business in that country so well. He must be paid ten times as much, and his food be provided at five times the expence. Mines in South America must be conducted on the same principles of cautious experience as are observed in similar undertakings by the natives, and the same general system adopted, or they cannot be expected to remunerate adventurers.

The writer considers it as a matter to be deeply lamented, that Captain Head's "Rough Sketches" were produced at such an untimely moment, in aid of the general distaste. The denunciation of so respectable an authority in talent and station were calculated to prevent that impartial investigation into facts respecting American mining on the part of the public, which it was very desirable should take place.

People with such and similar evidence, do not trouble themselves to think and reason, but adopt recorded opinions. They look to their own individual losses as the criterion for their judgments. It does not strike such, that a mining surface and interior like that of San Pedro Nolasco, for example, could not be fairly tried by a momentary superficial examination. Months rather than a few hours are necessary for the task of determining the intrinsic value of such a work.

The writer fully admits the justice of Captain Head's observations as to bringing the British system of mining to bear in South America. The climate, the rarity of the air, and the mode of working are formidable objections, and he is not surprised that a sight of the interior of these mines was enough to make the Cornish men concur in the abandonment of Captain Head's objects, nay even to urge it, especially as their pay was certain to be forthcoming for an extended term, without service in them. It should be stated, however, that the South American miners (whom the present writer had in view for the laborious part of the Company's service) in

the populous and elevated districts of Upper Peru, being born among and bred to the inconveniences of the country, and not forced, as the Indians were, to toil beyond their physical powers, go through their day's labour with as little fatigue as an English workman who is at the flail from sunrise to sunset. The great physical powers of these people are admitted by Captain Head, though in a mode strangely contradictory to himself.* For instance, how does

* "A small solitary hut was before us, and we were accosted by two or three wretched looking miners, whose pale countenances and exhausted frames seemed to assimilate with the scene around them. The view from the eminence on which we stood was magnificent; it was sublime: but it was, at the same time, so terrific, that one could hardly help shuddering."—*Head's Sketches*, p. 220, 221.

"And I then sent out for one of the apires with his load —I put it on the ground, and endeavoured to rise with it, but could not, and when two or three of my party put it on my shoulders, I was barely able to walk under it. The English miner who was with us was one of the strongest men of all the Cornish party, yet he was scarcely able to walk with it, and two of our party who attempted to support it were altogether unable, and exclaimed 'that it would break their backs.'"—Pages 226, 227.

superior physical strength correspond with the pale, wretched appearance of the miners? It is not the proprietor's interest to overwork his few obtainable *mineros practicos*, and the author doubts if English miners, emerging from their subterraneous caverns in their working dress, would not look equally cadaverous and wretched.

I have no motive to speak in praise of mining associations, wretchedly conducted as they have been; but it is my duty to state that I differ from Captain Head upon the grand principle of their importance to us as a nation, notwithstanding the heavy losses arising from mis-management and the calculations of over-excited cupidity. I have only said, "there was the ground and here the capital;" this way alone America would have amply repaid us.

Captain Head asserts in the introduction to his recent reports, that two millions have already been expended in mining transactions in South America, and that many millions are still embarked. The present writer wishes he would explain the when and how, and doubts if, including his own company, and the four others which have

been formed applying to Chili, Peru, and the La Plata, £300,000 have been expended. But were the calculations of £2,000,000 correct, what is the loss of such an amount put into the bullion returns of the country, or how can it affect the commercial welfare of Great Britain? Because we have sunk £2,000,000 (though the writer doubts if we have yet expended half of this sum including the Pasco mines) and because South America possesses at present (and this is bold assumption) neither political rank nor moral character, we are to leave it to its fate, abandon all views of mutual national benefit from it, and neither endeavour to retrieve our losses nor improve those fine countries by our influence and example.

All who have read Captain Head's entertaining book, must recollect his description of the celebrated mines of St. Pedro Nolasco, in which "Temporales," fatigue, heat, cold, hard beef, melted snow water, and terrific natural scenery, seem to have been viewed as obstacles to exploring them. Now these very mines have since been worked by a friend of the present writer's—these very mines of St. Pedro

Nolasco, which Captain Head refused!—and a very large sum of money has already been realized.* This friend, it must be observed, works it with native hands; and knowing the country, and applying only what additional advantages his own science may afford, has already realized a most handsome remuneration. This

* While the foregoing pages were in the press, a letter was received by Mr. William Hodgson, from Captain A. Robson, from which I have been allowed to publish the following extract, which *substantiates the opinion I have repeatedly expressed, of the great value of the mines at St. Pedro Nolasco, and the severe loss which the association has incurred in this district by Captain Head's conduct.* It may be remarked, that both the writer of the letter and his correspondent are perfectly *disinterested*, neither of them being connected, directly or indirectly, with the Rio de la Plata Mining Association.

"Santiago de Chili, Feb. 8th, 1827.

"I have lately been with Mr. Humphrey Bunster, to his mines of St. Pedro Nolasco; Mr. Bunster has got out ores, that will give him upwards of 400,000 dollars."—*Lieutenant Grosvenor Bunster's Observations on Captain F. B. Head's Reports relative to the Failure of the Rio de la Plata Mining Association, p.* 146.

fact is worth a thousand assertions to every candid reader.

In considering the question of South American mining, the competency of the native miner was never calculated upon. The superiority of the European was taken for granted; but it was a fallacy to imagine that the copper and tin miners of Cornwall could be competent judges of the appearance, character, and value of metallic substances to which they were unaccustomed, without having had previous experience in the country. Could it be reasonably expected men should guide, who themselves wanted direction!

The work of Mr. Miers,* as far as respects

* This gentleman, hostile to the people of Chili and to its mines, states that "in consequence of the revolution and the impolitic annihilation of Spanish capital, mines here have been less extensively wrought."—*Miers' Travels in Chili*, p. 447, 448. He states that in 1817 the mint coinage alone of that country was £1,161,283 dollars, but in 1824 only £193,094, being a deficiency of a million annually in seven years. Where is the capital to work the mines and replace this deficiency to be obtained? The British government must be well aware of this fact, as affecting South America generally, by the great deficiency of bul-

Chili alone, is the best yet published. The disappointment of some of his speculations no doubt led him into a few inaccuracies, by prejudicing him against the Chilian character; but his book is a valuable accession to our knowledge of that country. Chili is undoubtedly the poorest mining district of South America, and must not of course be compared with Peru. It does not boast the extensive mining population of the latter country, and therefore cannot support a large competition, or bear experimental adventures to any great extent: still it may and does possess an abundance of the precious ores. In vegetable productions, it is affluent, and at Santiago especially little comparative attention to mining pursuits has accordingly been paid. Still the existence of the precious metals is admitted on all hands; and therefore, there must be a mode of getting at them, even in Chili, now as well as heretofore. How this is to be done is the question on which the late companies, and those who know the country best, have been at issue.

lion remittances to Europe of late years through men of war, and must feel it is an object of great importance that the supply be renewed.

The present volumes are chiefly compiled from memory, aided by pencil memoranda, taken with not the slightest view to future publication; hence the writer's excuse for any want of fulness in them. His track was new; few if any of his countrymen ever before took the desert route to the Pacific, and enjoyed the satisfaction he felt at crossing it, as a reward for some passing inconveniences and fatigues. To the character of an author he makes no pretence. He is willing to contribute his mite to the general stock of information respecting South America; but he is a sailor, whose course of life, like the contents of these volumes, has been desultory—rough and varied as a passage over the Andes, on Salta mules; and his principal object is to steer his bark in good repute to the end of her voyage With this character, and these pretensions, he hopes for critical forbearance, in the assurance that his motives, if pure, will be respected, and that he who gives but little, if he gives his all, is entitled to the same reward, as to intention, with the richest donor.

ERRATA TO VOL. I.

The reader will substitute *Gaucho* for "Guacho;" *Tucumanos*, for "Tucumanese;" *Choromo* for "Chiromo;" *Ayacucho* for "Ayachucho; also—

Page	line	
19	13	*Faunch*, for "Fonche."
20	20	*hijo del pais*, for "hijo del paiz."
30	9	*interseeting*, for "interesting."
124		*Scyllam*, for "Scyllem."
171	22	*cuchillos en uno*, for "enchillas in una."
173	14	dele "the."
209	7	*El Pino*, for "El Pina."
211	10	*Ugarte*, for "Uogarte."
256	2	*Inglaterra*, for "Ingleterra."
282	5	*Mariano*, for "Moriano."
283	11	*Ordenanza de Mineria*, for "Ordinanza de Minaria."
290	21	*Funciones*, for "Functions."

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&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

Making Land—Consolation under disappointment—Pass the Isles of Lobos and Flores—Monte Video—Navigation to Buenos Ayres—Population of that Province—City of Buenos Ayres—Paseo Publico—Opera—Domestic Economy of the Citizens—Set out for Cordova—The Pampas—Travelling annoyances—Guacho Boots—Mode of taking Partridges—Change of Scenery—The Paso de Ferrayra—Hideous Negro—Arrival in sight of Cordova.

THE want of interest and the monotony during a sea voyage are proverbial. I shall, therefore, pass by its few details, and begin at the time when we first made the land of the American continent, which took place on Saturday, March

the 19th, 1825, at half past 12, P.M. The atmosphere was so dense, that the shore could only be distinguished in a very faint outline. From its jutting appearance, and from due reference to the reckoning and soundings, it was immediately pronounced to be, and greeted as Cape St. Mary. Our captain immediately tacked, and stood off with a degree of caution, which did honour to his experience, for it might have been hazardous had he attempted running into the Rio de la Plata during the night. The mariner arriving from seaward does not always rightly compute the set of the tides, in the navigation of this river, and thus many a vessel has been thrown upon shoals and sand banks, when those on board imagined themselves under fair way in mid channel.

Who has not experienced the unutterable pleasure of making land, after being two or three months at sea?—who that has crossed the great, "dark heaving," and, to the voyager's

mind, interminable deep, wearied by the perpetual uniformity of scene, and cribbed within the scanty room a vessel affords, and has not exulted at the first glimpse of the shore? It is like a resurrection from the dead. Then follow anticipations of the comparative independence, pleasure, and luxury which the land has in store. Who, so situated, has not been animated at the prospect in a manner none but those who feel it can tell?

But this sensation of delight is not confined alone to the passenger unaccustomed to a sea life; the whole ship's company partakes in it, from the captain who hails the boy at the mast-head to inquire how the land bears, to the very dog that seems instinctively to snuffle the shore as he stands wagging his tail at the gang-way, and sharing the satisfaction observable in the faces around him. On those who have not been at sea before, and on the passengers it seems to act like a contagion, causing a momentary aberration of

intellect. Some mount the rigging, who had never till then ventured the hazardous experiment; others rub their hands and grind their teeth in a paroxysm of rapture, or call their servants not knowing what they want of them. One rummages his pockets for a key, which is at the same time safe in his writing desk, while another is getting out his clothes and letters, to be ready for the first boat that may come along side, though a moment's reflection might convince him that the following day would be time enough to make his preparations for the purpose. This excitement having somewhat abated, the next object which fixed the general attention on board our vessel was the agility of the skipper, who mounted to the mast head (having his spy-glass slung over his shoulders) with a most grave and important alacrity, and was followed by a steady sailor close at his heels, a sort of naval aid-de-camp. Now he is seen to cross the top sail yard, and examine with scrupulous

exactness the prominences of the shore, inquiring of the officer on deck how his glass bears with reference to the most remarkable points of observation. Having fully satisfied himself, he descends, and with an air of self-importance, marked by a silence characteristic of his profound professional knowledge, mysteriously declines answering any of the questions of his lubberly passengers—questions certainly not of the most lucid character at the distance the vessel is from the land—"Did you see any houses? Any people on horseback? Any cattle grazing?" To all these he preserves an awful silence; kicks over the wisest of the animals on deck, the poor dog, that to attract his notice has jumped on the quarter deck carronade, and impedes his approach to the binnacle; he hurries on to the compass, and finally bolts down the companion ladder. He is quickly followed by his anxious passengers, helter-skelter. They closely surround him as he sets off the ship's

position upon his weather-beaten chart, and finds its exact distance from the nearest promontory. Now he breaks his mysterious silence, orders a glass of wine or grog to be brought him, and after drinking the healths of his passengers, but not until then, acquaints them that his reckoning by lunar observation is exact within a mile, and by chronometer, three miles and a half, east or west of truth, as it happens to be. No one present doubts the accuracy of his statement, few are able, or, if able, willing to dispute the question. The expected laudatory observations upon his good seamanship follow. Gratulations, numerous and warm, overflow. The sly ones begin to reiterate the most complimentary phrases on the superior seamanship and skill of their chief, which has so successfully brought them to the happy termination of their voyage. The skipper's good humour and self-consequence keep pace with each other, for skippers, as well as princes, are susceptible of

flattery. He orders his steward in consequence to sound the wine-lockers for some rare old wine, which he will have it believed has been concealed there for a long time, like a hidden treasure. He now swallows a second glass, and hastens upon deck, anxious to be correct about the bearing of the shore. In the interim all past feuds and contests with him on the passage are forgotten. His wine is drank, as well as his health, with united acclamation, and announced to him in due form on his return below. For the honour he has received he is now most graciously pleased to express his gratitude, and furthermore condescends to acquaint his auditory that he has the prospect of landing them all well, with his best wishes and hopes towards them, on the following day. This latter information recals the erring senses of the most sanguine to the necessity of adjusting matters for another night. Their apparel is now restored to the trunks by those who were just before a little too

certain of treading immediately upon *terra firma*. The morning dawns, but, alas! to the rueful disappointment of all, the shore is out of sight. The wind which wafted the vessel prosperously into the offing the evening before, has come round and blows foul. Murmurs break forth, not loud, but deep. Some, who the night before were most vociferous in praise of the captain's skill, now hint about bad management. Others impatiently express their despair of ever getting into port. At breakfast all is silence and despondency. The captain demure and thoughtful —the passengers sullen, until the former, to compromise matters, orders his steward to cut the throat of the last pig left on board, and designed as a present to the consignee, and to be sure and make some good mock turtle soup of the head, for the gentlemen. This order, given so evidently with the intention of restoring equanimity, soon removes the gloom from the countenances of all, and the uncertainties and

disappointments of *land-making*, furnish a consolation, and afford an ample theme of discourse to beguile the time, until its hoped for re-appearance, which it is anticipated cannot be long.

The day following our first making land, namely, the 20th of March, we passed in recovering the lee way of the preceding night. On the 21st—the weather charming, the sea smooth as a mill-pond, and all in excellent spirits—we sailed close under the Island of Lobos. A novel sight was witnessed here by most of the passengers, in the gambols of thousands of seals, sea-lions, and sea-elephants, which abound at this island, literally covering its entire shores. Some were sporting with their young; others reared their blubbery heads, and stared at us, as we sailed by, with a *Lubin Log* species of intelligence depicted in their countenances. We now shaped our course to give the Island of Flores a wide birth, in doing which, and

treading too much on the English bank, we were set a little out of our fair course; but passing within hail of the Brazilian frigate, Maria Gloriosa, moored there, we hauled up, and stood for the harbour of Monte Video, in which we let go an anchor at midnight.

Tuesday, March the 23d, we landed at day break, in company with the captain, in order to pay our personal respects to the British Consul, and deliver our letters. Finding we were a little too early for paying the Consular respects, we rambled round, and through the town, once so flourishing and well-conditioned, but now exhibiting a picture of intestine troubles, and the ravages of what "worse ambition" denominates "glorious war." Ruined ramparts, broken up streets, dirty and decayed habitations, a mean and miserable population, chequered with complexions of every variety, from the jet black to the mustee, and thence to the pale creolian hue. There was also every variety of habiliment—the

broad brimmed Franciscan's, white frocked Capuchin's, and mitred patron saint's at the corners of the streets. The jingling of convent bells came on the ear from every side. Interesting women, so intent upon early mass or confession, that a glance could barely be obtained at their eyes—those "black prophet eyes," as Byron expresses it, sufficiently denoting who are the present masters of what was once the Gibraltar of the Rio de la Plata:—

> But barring sights and symbols such as these
> One's *nose* will certify 'tis Portuguese!

After a visit to the market, which appeared well supplied with fruit and vegetables, we waited upon the Consul, who politely detained us to breakfast. In the course of conversation we touched upon mining concerns, and soon found that the news of the mining fever raging at home, had reached Buenos Ayres, and was having an effect there such as might naturally have been predicted. The principal merchants

at that place were taking active steps to obtain a monopoly of mines for themselves, or, by securing them for friends and correspondents at home, endeavouring to realize every possible profit. We heard, also, that several persons had arrived there by the last packet, as accredited agents for a similar purpose.

After taking leave of the Consul and his lady, of whose politeness we entertain a grateful recollection, and being well stored with food for the vessel, both animal and vegetable, and having obtained all necessary information, we returned on board with a pilot, and were under weigh by 10 A.M. After noon was passed, however, we again came to an anchor, our pilot not choosing to encounter the flats on a moonless night.

On the 24th we again weighed to work up the river. The wind at length became a leading one and we coursed it fairly, dropped anchor until the ebb tide was over, weighed again, stood in

for the harbour of Buenos Ayres, and finally came to anchor in the outer roads, about a cable's length from a French brig, in which an admiral's flag was flying.

At 10 A. M. on the 25th we accompanied the Captain to the shore, which was at a distance of six or seven miles from our vessel. A caravan, drove out alongside the boat and took us in, and a little after eleven o'clock we were safely ashore in Buenos Ayres.

The province of Buenos Ayres has been calculated to contain a population of 120,000 persons, exclusive of the Indians, including whom it has been estimated at from 240 to 250,000. This estimate seems, from a recent statement by Don Ygnacio Nuñez, to be extremely wide of the truth. If one might judge, however, from the indication afforded by a large extent of ground, covered with long ranges of streets, growing suburbs, and a pretty dense population, principally occupied in commerce, it would be

supposed that the city alone contained a population approximating to the first-mentioned numbers.* The activity and bustle in the city itself is very considerable, and announces it to be a place prospering greatly under the controul of its independent and liberal government, which has diminished to a very trifling sum, the old exactions, in the shape of duties, and abrogated the interdictory and stupid edicts of the Spanish government. The consequences of this are seen and felt in the liquidation of the national debt. Economy and order are preserved in all departments of the government, with great dispatch. No smuggling takes place, for it is not worth while, and monkishness and bigotry have declined. The good effect is visible in the cheerfulness

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*Señor Nunez rates the population, but without any specification of Indians—the City at 81,136
Country 82,080

Being only an entire population of 163,216

and spirit of the people, who show an independance and freedom as creditable to their progress in liberty and knowledge, as it is agreeable to an Englishman to witness.

The scourge of war has, since the foregoing was written, been inflicted upon this rising people, and will, it is to be feared, place them in a stationary position, if it does not force them to retrograde. The possession of Monte Video (which the cupidity of the Brazilians has made a bone of contention), may be long before it is decided. The acknowledgment of their independence by, and the late celebration of their treaty with, Great Britain, through Mr. Woodbine Parish, a gentleman universally esteemed there, together with the more recent arrival of Lord Ponsonby, as ambassador, must have afforded them some alleviation amid the gloom of this vexatious, and, on the part of Brazil, most unjust contest.

To return from the foregoing short digression.

The contemplated mining adventures formed in England, give increased pleasure and satisfaction at Buenos Ayres. The results of commercial activity are looked upon with laudable anticipations of benefit to the nation. The governor-general, Las Heras, is famous for his conduct at the retreat of Cancha Rayada, and at the subsequent battle of Maypo, which insured the independence of Chili. He displays a conduct equally unexceptionable in the arts of peace and of civil government at home. The British merchants, shortly after our arrival, announced their intention of giving a magnificent ball, in celebration of the commercial union of the two nations, for which 25,000 dollars were quickly subscribed. A proof of the wealth and liberality, as well as of the consideration of the English residents.

The entire occupation of my time with the immediate objects of my mission to South America, deprived me of the opportunity it

afforded of recording here those graphic delineations and descriptive touches of character as to society, which leisure might enable others not so occupied to give. I visited, it is true, the Paseo Publico, or Alameda, which in appearance boasts of nothing inviting, nor did it seem to me to be, as in other places, the customary promenade of high bred dames and haughty cavaliers. The Paseo Publico is ill laid out—a mere stunted parterre of trees, seeming destined for no other purpose but to force the sea air into the stiffened lungs of a few old Spaniards and feeble convalescents. The solemnities of Easter taking place about this time might, it is true, have been the cause in some degree of this desertion.

On Sunday, the 27th, it being the only opportunity I had of so doing, I went to the Opera, the mirror in every country of fashion and fashionable taste. It may well be styled at Buenos Ayres, "The Picture Gallery of the

City." It exhibited some rare specimens of female grace and beauty in the boxes, and of well dressed men in the pit. The performers were a trifle perhaps above mediocrity. A ballet was exhibited, during which it was impossible not to be pleased with a general burst of disapprobation from the audience at the *outré* dress of one of the male dancers, of Portuguese cabric, from the court of Rio de Janeiro, highly characteristic of the superior moral feeling of the people of this city. This exposure of person I cannot detail here; but the indelicacy of a French dancer at the British Opera, of one "who twirls the light limb that scorns the needless veil," is far outdone by the *figurantes* of Don Pedro. The indignation of the audience was fully justified at this sample of the brothel habits of court fashion at Rio.

In endeavouring to form an opinion of the domestic economy of the inhabitants of Buenos Ayres from what I witnessed while under the roof

of its present envoy here, Don Manuel Saratea, I should state my impression to be that they are making rapid advances in copying the British, as well in respect to their furniture and the decorations of their houses, as in the attractions of the table. The taste of Don Manuel for the Fine Arts, and Natural History in particular, is every where visible in his domicile, which contains many excellent pictures. In his sala and conservatory, there are very rare and valuable specimens well worthy the attention of the naturalist. The accommodation at the Fonda of Mr. Fonche is excellent, and the charges reasonable. We dined here a large party, consisting of three commissioners for separate interests, several of their assistants, together with Captains of miners and others. A good dinner was daily provided, consisting of fish, flesh, poultry, and game in abundance, all of excellent quality, together with a pint of wine

and a variety of fruit. For this we paid about one dollar each person.

Before quitting the city of Buenos Ayres, I should feel myself remiss if I did not allude to the hospitable reception I met with, from the British Consul, and this without any letter of introduction, but merely as a passing countryman; his politeness and that of his lady could not be exceeded. His home, and the establishment he keeps up, are strictly in consonance with British character and hospitality. I found every thing there truly English, in style and comfort, a rare sight in so remote a land, and the way in which we were received almost made me envy those who had the happiness of the consul's familiar intercourse.

April 16th, every thing being ready for my departure, I started for Cordova, across the Pampas. My company consisted of a gentleman an *hijo del paiz* of that city, and Mr.

Menoyo my assistant in the business upon which I went out. Our vehicle was well calculated to bear the concussions from stony roads, and pantanos, but in appearance old fashioned enough to exhibit as a curiosity of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. An additional horse was saddled occasionally, and we pursued our journey with five, each having a peon, at a most rapid rate. I calculated our progress at ten miles an hour. An immense quantity of baggage was stowed away both before and behind the body of the carriage, which was suspended upon straps of hides. Underneath was hung a hide apron, carrying four four dozen cases of the Cordovese's wine, and a quantity of viands, sweetmeats, and other useful articles; in short, it was a cellaret and larder combined.

The inside of the foregoing carriage was cushioned, and crowded with pockets of all shapes and sizes, to receive guns, pistols, swords, books, and other items belonging to the tra-

veller, while writing desks, baskets, and even trunks, bespoke the internal capacity of this waggon-loaded machine, to be equal to its external, and it had been made fully as useful. The Cordovese gentleman, my companion, seemed out of spirits. The truth was, he had just parted for six weeks and for the first time, from a wife who was very fond of him. He threw himself with a visible air of distress into the corner of the Diligence, and drawing the flap of his travelling cap over one cheek, indulged the melancholy feeling, with which his recent parting had inspired him. I was for rallying him on his grief, which to me seemed ridiculous on such a trivial separation; but my assistant, a little Anglo-Spaniard, better acquainted with the feelings and sympathies of the South American character, very seasonably checked me. The attachments of this people are strong, and their feelings remarkably susceptible of any slight impression. Having arrived at the end of the

first post, seven leagues, we halted for the night. By the aid of a good supper, and two or three bottles of excellent claret, followed by a glass or two of the *Martinique* of the country, our spirits revived. A despatch of our safe arrival thus far was sent back to his lady, by the inconsolable Cordovese cavalier: and we retired to rest in a miserable dormitory, but not to sleep. Myriads of those insects, which a late president of the Royal Society is said to have asserted were incipient lobsters, made us their prey; no eyes but those of the Guachos of the country could have closed amongst them; but these are said to be unable to slumber unless soothed by the blood extracting operation of those active phlebotomists.

These enormous plains, or pampas, are the region of Guacho and animal independence and liberty. This immense level might not unappropriately be denominated a "terrene ocean." The horizon, uninterrupted, and apparently

unbounded, is overwhelmingly vast to the mind of the beholder. Its extent, climate, indigenous vegetation, and isolated inhabitants have been so variously described, that I should be thought to amplify too much if I attempted it here, especially when contemporary travellers* have so recently given the world lively and interesting descriptions of them. However, I can vouch, that to the traveller over the pampas it is so common to flounder into the holes of the biscachos, to squat by the fire of the *Guacho* on the skeleton head of the horse, and get bled at night by the rapier of the great South American cimex, called in the country benchuca, that nothing is thought of it. It is equally true, that, riding *à la Guacho*, you saddle your own horse, live upon beef and water, sleep on the earth, and gallop from a hundred to one hundred and fifty miles a day, (that is in case of a *forced* journey), and the doing which is no

* Miers and Head.

doubt calculated to promote health, and impart to the mind a pleasant feeling of independence. It is certain with all this that the apprehension of encountering Salteadores* and Indians, at the fall of the year, when they make their incursions after the thistles are dead, is not pregnant with the most agreeable thoughts. The decay of the thistles which cover these plains, and grow in the season to an enormous height, is essential before the Indian horse and rider can prowl the pampas, as their bodies are not then exposed to the formidable spines of the plant which autumn and winter scatter before the winds. These alarms are not diminished by the sight of an eighteen feet lance, which is exhibited at one of the intrenched post houses on the road, having been left there by a party of these marauders after an attack, which was gallantly repulsed. In another part of my route I had ample proofs of the barbarity of these

* Robbers.

banditti towards persons less able to resist them; in forsaken Ranchos and other relics of the devastations they had committed. On our arrival at one of these deserted posts, we saw neither horses nor human beings, and found it necessary to make a digression of fifteen leagues out of the road. On the whole line the people were in consternation, with horses saddled, and ready for flight, should the outposts of the Guachos bring intelligence of any distant cloud of dust. It happened almost daily that the appearance of a party of Civicos, or an escort of troops from Cordova, or Santa Fé, set the poor people on the retreat. A party of this description at one time made us prepare for resistance, and get ready our pistols and blunderbusses, while in common with our Cordovese, a fellow-traveller, we did not feel quite free from apprehension.

Among the anecdotes and customs of the Guachos which Captain Head has recorded,

the following do not appear. The boots of the Guachos are formed of the ham and part of the leg-skin of a colt, taken reeking from the mother, which is said to be sacrificed for the sole purpose, just at that time of bearing, when the hair has not begun to grow. At this stage the skin strips off easily, and is very white and beautiful in texture and appearance. The ham forms the calf of the boot, the hock easily adapts itself to the heel, and the leg above the fetlock constitutes the foot, the whole making a neat and elegant half-boot, with an aperture sufficient for the great toe to project through.* This toe is the only part of the foot the Guacho places in the stirrup, following the practice of some of the tribes of Asiatic horsemen in this respect. With constant use this member becomes a powerful security to the body, fully equal to the service of the European foot. The stirrup is made of a piece of horn, or tough wood, generally triangu-

* See also Appendix.

lar, having a small opening to receive the toe. In consequence of this use the great toe protrudes beyond the rest in an unsightly manner, and is of unusual dimensions as to breadth. I was much surprised, too, at observing the dexterity with which these people take partridges. This is accomplished by means of a noose fixed to the end of a rod. While riding at a gallop, the *Guacho's* eye, remarkable for its quickness, espies the bird; he instantly brings his horse upon its haunches, and forms round the bird, at first a distant, and then by degrees a nearer circle. The partridge watches the noose, and disregards the snarer, who is still approaching it, becomes bewildered, and instead of taking wing suffers its neck to be caught, and is drawn up like a fish. The rider hangs it to his saddle bow, and gallops after his party, which he soon rejoins. By this mode of taking them we had a plentiful supply of partridges daily for our supper.

The distance from Buenos Ayres to Cordova is a little more than five hundred miles*. The first hundred is over a dead level, but interesting to the stranger from its novelty. It contains here and there a pantano,† inconvenient for a heavy carriage to be drawn through. The post huts, at the distance of from four to eight leagues from each other, ensure the traveller a supply of horses, except when the Indians drive away the inhabitants and their cattle from such of them as are unintrenched. When this is the case, it is necessary to take relays of horses for two or three stages, to supply the deficiency.

On our reaching the first river, called the Saladillo, I observed the action of fire at some remote period on its banks. The stiff marle of its bed is incorporated with calcined shells. Passing Barrancas, the traveller, six leagues further on, reaches Fraile Muerto, where the ascent begins. The post-houses are regular,

* Or 173 leagues. † Gully-hole.

and the eye is relieved from the distressing black uniformity of the pampas. The foliage of underwood now gladdens the eye. Nature increases in beauty as the ascent continues, and varied and rich scenery presents itself. This grateful prospect is soon exchanged for a dense jungle, which lasts nearly the whole way to Cordova, save in the neighbourhood of the Rio Tercero and other interesting streams.

At the Paso de Ferreyra as we were driving down the steep, some difficulty or danger was announced to us by a halloa in no ordinary tone of voice. The Guacho boys pulled up in a moment; and on letting down the window to discover whence it proceeded, the head of a negro, of most gigantic dimensions and hideous ugliness, was thrust into the carriage. On this solitary spot, it was impossible that the recent barbarities of the Indians should not rush upon the mind at such an appearance. It was difficult to retain one's self-possession before the

horrible countenance that had surprised us. I had never witnessed any human face so gigantic and horrible, except among the savages of the unexplored regions of Papua, or New Guinea, when they yell forth their terrible cries. For the first time, I believed the Caliban of Shakspeare embodied, and staring me in the face. The African rode on a mule, stark naked. His eyes were black and fierce, covered by eyebrows of frightful shagginess, and, from ardent spirits which he had been swallowing, they literally flamed in their sockets. His expanded nostrils, which seemed to constitute all the nose he possessed, were well nigh inhumed in the backward curl of his upper lip. His mouth was enormously large, and the expression of his features demoniacal. His front teeth, by accident or design, had many of them been knocked out; and the sounds which issued from between them were deep and hollow. His stature was colossal, a perfect Hercules in strength; well propor-

tioned and finely moulded, with the exception of his legs, which presented the common defect of his country, in being bandy. It was at first difficult to understand what he wanted, the noise he made was so stunning and boisterous; but we at length found that the river before us being rapid and much swollen, he had come to proffer us his assistance in crossing it. Notwithstanding this, his gestures and vociferations appeared those of a maniac; and when he put his shoulder to the wheels, his single effort seemed to do more in promoting their motion than the whipping and spurring of all our peons. When half-way over we stuck fast, and it became necessary to lighten the vehicle by removing the luggage. The bed of the stream was shelving, and additional horses were harnessed to pull the carriage on at the suggestion of our Charon, whose exertions were well applied on the occasion. By a united pull the machine was forced out of its situation, and we next in our attempts

to get forward obliquely, got it into deep water, when the stream taking it on the angle, turned it over, and drifted it quietly along to the opposite shore. The lining, cushions, and all things inside were completely drenched.

While matters were arranging for our further progress, the negro attempted to amuse us with a variety of antics, singular and disgusting enough, and in return for the gratuity made him for his services, and stimulated by an additional draft of "*Aguardiënte*" out of a silver goblet,* wished my companion to accept his

* An idea may be formed of the monstrous capacity of this fellow's mouth, by the fact, that the rim of the goblet, bell-shaped, and containing a pint measure, was admitted easily within the orifice of his lips, inside which its circumference was buried. His strength and agility may be judged from his fame in the bull ring at Cordova, where, as we afterwards heard, he frequently tired out the fiercest bull, by vaulting on its back, and remaining so firmly seated, that every effort of the furious animal to dislodge him being in vain, it would at length fall exhausted beneath its Herculean rider; a sight that obtained more applause for the negro, than the death of half a dozen bulls by the weapons of the Matadores. In love, there is no

mule as a present, which was one of the finest I had ever seen.

The style of road accommodation improved as we approached Cordova. The spot was pointed out to me, where the remains of General Linier are deposited. This officer being ordered to return to Buenos Ayres, to answer a charge of compromise of his country's liberty, was met here by a military escort, and shot. Linier was a Frenchman, of considerable military talent, and was the principal cause of the re-capture of Buenos Ayres from the British, under General Beresford. For this service, he was declared a Viceroy, which probably cost him his life.* On the promulgation of the principles of freedom, he retired to

accounting for a lady's taste. This Negro Hercules was married to a respectable young woman, and, as report said, the mistress of no ordinary charms. The connection was, however, of very short duration, the lady finding herself necessitated to return to her friends not long after the knot was tied.

See Appendix.

Cordova, the hold of all those attached to the royal cause, and if he did not actually intrigue against the new order of things, his presence there sanctioned the acts of the discontented, and was dangerous to the public peace. The history of revolutions is unfortunately never free from acts of cruelty, which the excess of popular feeling, or the less excusable plea of expediency, can never justify. In the present case, a brave officer who had saved the country, was put to death without an hour's notice, or even the form of a trial. It is true the South Americans were not without numerous precedents among European nations, for such violences, and it is to their infinite credit, that the annals of their revolution are disgraced with so few instances of cruelty and outrage.

After crossing the Rio Segundo, sixteen leagues from Cordova, we stopped at the Estancia of a friend of my travelling companion, whose appearance and hospitality made me recal

to memory, what is told of our feudal barons. His retainers were as numerous and as obedient as theirs were, but in all probability infinitely less ferocious. We were lodged comfortably for the night, and here finding ourselves wholly free from our persevering insect enemies, we enjoyed refreshing repose. The *cimex* of South America, like that of Europe, and in size equal to our black beetle, retreats after annoying the unfortunate sleeper, into holes and crevices, without any trace by which it can be discovered. The mark on the skin and the effects alone, but too clearly prove that it has visited you, for it is rarely seen.

The following morning we arose early to prepare for our entrance into Cordova, of which city we soon gained a fine view from a commanding eminence, and of which we shall speak in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Modes of carriage at Cordova—Effect of abatement of duties—Cordovese family—Reception at Cordova—Manners—Mining proceedings—Conduct of South Americans in Trade—Rioja—The mines of Famatina—Aranco described—Department of Famatina—of Guandacol—of Llanos—Famatina mountains described—Mineral productions.

WHILE yet on the hill which commands Cordova, on our route from Buenos Ayres, and while we were admiring the handsome appearance it made, we were impeded by a numerous train of carts, which it occupied us no little time to pass. These ponderous and rudely built vehicles have been so often described, it is useless to enlarge here upon their con

struction. They were returning empty from Salta and Jujuy, at which places they ultimately discharge the goods which they convey from Buenos Ayres, and afford the means of travelling at an easy price to the inhabitants of the different towns and villages on their road, who are unable to bear the expense of post horses. I counted above a hundred and thirty persons thus accommodated, chiefly women calculated for household service. The great number of persons of this class, journeying to Buenos Ayres, from the Northern provinces of the Union, bespeaks as much the poverty and want of employ for the population there, as it affords a proof of the increasing prosperity of the metropolitan city, under the wise and politic measures of the minister Rivadavia. To him is it indebted for the increase of foreign capital, and its application to the commercial productions of the provinces of the Rio de la Plata. He not only made Buenos Ayres the

key to commerce, but with the ingenuity of a Bramah, contrived that none should understand how to use it without his consent. Thus he has concentrated internal and foreign trade, and taken the wisest measures for the promotion of all that can contribute to their increase. It appears more than probable, that the great reduction of importation duties on British goods which he effected, will enable the merchants of Buenos Ayres to command the extensive markets of Upper Peru, and that a revival of trade is not far distant among the suffering people who inhabit the interior provinces.* The only consideration being, whether the amount of the abatement will repay the land carriage and loss of time, which must be incurred by the use of caravans across the country,

* The more recent hostilities with Brazil, will, it is feared, cause a serious delay to the advancement of the trade with the interior provinces, which is deeply to be lamented.

but to favour which, also must be added, the freight and time by sea, round Cape Horn to the ports of the Pacific, with the addition of land carriage, on mules, thence to Potosi, Arequipa, La Paz, and other places similarly situated, in addition to a considerable *ad valorem* impost: in short, whether the amount saved by the reduction of the duties, the expense of sea carriage into the Pacific, and of mule carriage up the country on that side, will meet the carriage by the interior from Buenos Ayres direct. No doubt, the old mode must be, for a time at least, the most certain and expeditious; until that by Buenos Ayres be improved, all hope of which, in the present state of warfare in the provinces of the Rio de la Plata, has, of course, vanished.

On arriving at the slope of a hill, a courier came up, who had been despatched to meet us, and hail our arrival. Further on the road, the family of my travelling companion had posted

itself, with carriages to convey us from our bulky vehicle into the city. Nine years had elapsed since my South American friend had seen his relatives, and the meeting was, therefore, more than usually warm and affectionate; the feeling on each side it is impossible to describe. The mode of welcome on this occasion, consisted, between the males, of more than an English gripe of the hand, not quite equal to the paternal hug of the French with its cheek salutation, but a mixture of both.

We proceeded with our new friends, the Lozanos, and soon rattling over the streets, arrived at their house. The first kind ceremonies of welcome being over, we were shown into our apartments, where we dressed for dinner. I was next introduced to the head of the family. After this introduction, all the compliments peculiar to South America were observed, and I was overwhelmed with solicitations to partake of every dish put upon the table, the number of which was in-

conveniently numerous, and even profuse. The company, consisting principally of males, among whom were two holy fathers, was agreeable and well bred. The Señora, and four Señoritas her daughters, gave flattering proofs of the polite deportment, good government, and flourishing condition of the house of Lozano. Coffee succeeded a plentiful dessert, after which all of both sexes retired to the Sala. The young ladies soon after entertained us with some excellent music. I cannot help remarking here, an instance of the characteristic starchness and reserve of the old Spanish manners, which is still observable on the South American continent, where our English customs have not been adopted, which they generally are when an intercourse between individuals of the two nations has taken place, even in a very limited degree. Upon offering my arm to one of the young ladies, as her escort to the dining-room, she seemed overwhelmed with astonishment,

and even shocked, if I might judge from the expression of her countenance. Her brother, my late fellow traveller from Buenos Ayres, instantly explained away the seeming rudeness of my conduct, by informing her that it was now considered as much a mark of polite attention to a lady at Buenos Ayres, as in England, and was as generally practised. The young lady first looked at one of the padres present, her uncle, then at her mother, who shook her head. I felt awkward, and excused myself as well as I could, taking care for some time not to make a similar tender to a Cordovese lady. Before, however, I quitted that hospitable city, it became by no means a rare occurrence to see ladies and gentlemen arm in arm in the streets, a terrible innovation on old Spanish customs. By this time, I have no doubt that the strange spectacle of young ladies walking in a string, preceding their "mamma," is become completely unfashionable, to the horror of padres,

and duennas, and of all enemies of innovation, and to the destruction of "social order," after the notions of the old masters of the country.

The first few days of my arrival in Cordova, were occupied principally in visits of ceremony to the governor, Colonel Bustos; and to the principal families and individuals in the city. These visits were all duly returned. The liveliest satisfaction was every where displayed at the arrival of agents from England for the avowed purpose of setting the long neglected mines at work. Our reception by the governor was of that sober character, so distinctive of the old Spaniards, on the most trivial occasions. Upon opening to him the object of our mission, he went into a full consideration of it with all due gravity.

——————Deep on his front engraven,
Deliberation sat, and public care,

while he gave us his earnest and solemn attention. At length he promised the full weight of his influence in support of the Company.

We had to a certain extent been anticipated in our objects by the shrewd calculators at Buenos Ayres. These grasping individuals had taken measures previously, here as elsewhere, to establish a monopoly. They had, in fact, obtained a special, though not exclusive grant, of the mines of Cordova for nine years. Still, as the grant was not exclusive, the rich veins of the Rioja and Catamarca offered an ample field for adventure, and almost a certainty of success. I was, therefore, enabled to carry into effect, in a provisional way, some very valuable contracts in the Rioja hills. These have unfortunately terminated by the dissolution of the Company, on whose behalf I entered into them, to my great regret, and to the disappointment, if not inconvenience of the respectable persons in South America who granted them. Nor can I say this without adding infinite mortification to myself in being the instrument of causing it.

In the course of my negociations for mines with two adroit dealers* of Buenos Ayres, for a part of the Famatina privilege, I discovered those refinements in intrigue, those subtle artifices, and under-hand tricks, which characterize a people who, just freed from a yoke against the power of which artifice and trickery were the only defence, still retain it, united with many of the increased views and more enlightened principles of freedom. The duplicity and subterfuge of the Spanish government in South America, had, as is always the case in similar situations, tainted the actions of its subjects. Early habits are not to be changed, nor the moral impurities, left by misrule, purified at once, even by the fiery trial of a revolution. Time, successive generations of men, and the pride of advanced knowledge, will only suffice for these objects. I found no lack of duplicity and evasion in my operations at Cordova; and

* Señores Braula Costa, and Ventura Vasquez.

if they had not gone to the extent of violating honour and credit, they would have been tacitly looked upon as fair engines for gaining an object or settling a bargain. Nor did this conduct belong to the low in station, admitting the excuses of necessity or meanness. As we apply the epithet of black-legs in England, equally to a noble swindler at play, or a cock-pit ragamuffin, the character is not solitary as to station. I do not mean that this should be understood generally, of either the Buenos Ayreans, or Cordoveses. I would not judge so harshly, but I experienced its truth individually in the instance alluded to from persons moving in the highest sphere of society.

As I have thus digressed a little from Cordova, and mentioned the mine of Famatina as connected with it, I will, before resuming the regular order of my narration, give a short account of the province of Rioja, and the celebrated mineral district of Famatina.

Famatina, the capital of the district, was

founded in 1591. It is situated in lat. 30., and lon. 311., Spanish reckoning. The climate is hot and dry; but the city is well watered by canals, called Zequias, which are cut through the streets. In the entire province, the inhabitants are estimated at eighteen thousand; of these only three thousand five hundred reside in the capital. The productions of this province are few in number; there is very little trade, on account of its lying out of the great commercial routes. The arts and manufactures are unknown; agriculture is in a miserable state. The principal productions of the earth are oranges and wine. A million of the former, and three hundred loads* of wine, may be calculated upon every year for exchange with the neighbouring cities. Whatever besides the earth may produce is consumed within the territory.

Aranco, Famatina, Guandacol, and Los

* *Carga*, the original word, means the wine one horse can carry, or a horse-load of wine.

Llanos, are the four departments into which the province of Rioja is divided. The department of Aranco, is situated in the N. W.; it is twenty leagues from the capital, and about seventy in length, and contains three thousand inhabitants. The land is tolerably well fitted for vineyards and the cultivation of various kinds of fruit, but is not adapted for corn or pasturage. There are few rivulets that are never dry, so that no water can be permanently relied upon as a supply either for cattle or irrigation. By the cultivation of the vine, the inhabitants procure four or five thousand loads of wine annually, and fruit of numerous kinds is abundant. There are so few cattle that they are obliged to purchase their meat out of the neighbouring department of Llanos.

The department of Famatina is west of the capital about twenty-five leagues, and its territory extends to fifty. The land is very fertile; and the inhabitants, about four thousand in

number, are principally occupied with the cultivation of the vine. The produce is about three thousand loads, which, with the crops and fruits of various kinds, are consumed at home. Cattle are as scarce as in Aranco, and in like manner their meat is obtained from Llanos. Famatina is so called from a mountain of that name before noticed, and of which we shall presently speak.

The department of Guandacol is situated east of the capital, its nearest frontier being seventy leagues distant, and it extends its limits to a hundred. It is bordered by a ridge of mountains, which separates it from Chili, and the principal employment of the inhabitants (who are about fifteen hundred,) is agriculture. The soil is fertile, and produces much wheat, while water abounds for the purposes of irrigation. The produce is but little in the aggregate. The land is entailed, and the owners take small trouble with it; when the season arrives, the people prefer employing themselves in hunting

the vicuñas, in the Cordilleras, which are very numerous. The flesh is eaten, and the furs fetch a high price. Here is another proof of the cnase retarding the progress of agriculture, and no doubt that of the human mind with it, which writers have before frequently observed in other parts of the world.

The department of Llanos, is situated north west of the capital, the nearest frontier about thirty leagues, and the farthest, seventy. The inhabitants are about six thousand, generally occupied in rearing cattle, of which twenty thousand head are annually brought into the market.

The land in the vicinity of the capital, is unproductive. On the east side there is a tract of sixty or seventy leagues, on which a small quantity of useful timber is found. The plains are covered with very good pasturage, but there is a deficiency of water one part of the year. The well-water found on the plains is brackish, yet the cattle owners might avail themselves of

that which the rains produce, if large reservoirs were constructed; and the water of the Rio San Juan, it is credibly asserted, might be conveyed to them if the spirit of enterprize existed for such an undertaking, the success of which would be of immense importance, and amply repay the expense and trouble.

Two leagues on the west, elevated mountain land rises running in a direction from north to south, more than thirty leagues by twelve to fourteen wide On the summit are plains covered with abundant pasturage, but although there are streams of water there, the cattle descend to drink at the numerous small torrents which abound at the foot of this lofty eminence.

At the distance of thirty-five leagues from Rioja, stands the celebrated mountain ridge of Famatina. It is exceedingly rich in ores, and that portion, the outline of which is known, extends at the most moderate calculation, fourteen leagues in length, by ten or twelve in breadth,

according to the computation of the inhabitants, and judging from the partial exploration they have yet made of its enormous mass. Perhaps not one-hundredth part is yet tolerably known. This mountain is full of metallic veins of various kinds. The least vein worked, produces from six to twenty marks per box.* Until now that they have had an intercourse with foreigners, they considered it labour thrown away to work veins that would not produce from thirty to five hundred. All mining operations being liable to vicissitude, the proprietors, who have always been deficient in capital, have been constantly forsaking old works for new ; the latter giving a profit from the commencement, and the miners being without machinery, and very much wanting in metallurgical knowledge. Working under these disadvantages, they diminish very greatly the profits they might otherwise make.

On the mountain of Famatina there is wood,

* Caxon of fifty quintals.

pasturage, and cattle; and, four or five leagues distant in the plains, are villages containing several thousand inhabitants. The streams of water it possesses, would allow the establishment of numerous mills, and engines for assisting in the pulverization of the metallic ores, and would render productive what is now mere waste, returning from that even no trivial profit. The transport of metals or goods to the city is made by the inhabitants, carrying their loads over fifteen leagues of rugged, rocky ground, notwithstanding it may be avoided by a road further to the right of their present route, longer it is true, but consisting entirely of level land, in fact only crossing the plains. It is said, that the present road might be made tolerably good, were proper methods adopted; but of the practicability of this, I had of course no opportunity of forming a very correct judgment.

The vast chain of this mineral elevation, con-

sists of numerous mountain ridges, each containing veins of different metallic ores. In the centre of these ridges, towers over all, that from whence rises the summit of the Nevado, or snowy mountain,* so called from its rocky peak being clothed in eternal snow. I could not learn that any one had ever attempted to ascend it. The length of the ridge of the Nevado is at least fifty leagues, perhaps more.

Peasants qualified (inhabitants of the mountain of Potosi), who were working the mines here, being puzzled at the variety of the ores they met with, the indications varying and many of the mineral substances being wholly unknown to them, confined themselves to raising gold and silver only, under the customary appearances these metals bore. Of other mineral appearances they were ignorant, from their utter want of the scientific knowledge necessary to discover their nature and value. It is highly

* From "Nevada," snow shower.

probable that metals, the qualities of which are wholly unknown, exist in this extraordinary district—metals that, until the country is explored by sound mineralogists, the natives of Europe can never imagine to exist. The ores known to the native miners, are styled *Plomo ronco, Rosicler, Lisa, Paco, Azufrado, Aniado, &c.* and every one of these in its kind, offers many varieties. Plomo ronco, is silver mixed with lead, Paco, brown oxide of iron, and native silver; Rosicler, red or rose coloured ore; Lisa, lead ore, and sulphur, &c. &c. The first settlers in the country, in a petition addressed to Philip II. stated that they had built a town, near a mountain, containing gold, silver, quicksilver, and copper. Among other privileges they begged an exemption from paying duties called *Cobo y Quinto*, for five years, on account of the great expenses they alleged they had incurred, in discovering and setting these mines to work. It appears that the king did

not think fit to grant their prayer, which doubtless put a stop to their further exertions.

The object of the ancient Spanish government was to increase the population, in the succession of villages upon the high road to Peru; the conquest and tranquil possession of which, by the Spaniards, was earlier than the discovery of Famatina. The geographical situation of this last district, separated it from the line of villages and posts which formed the channel of traffic, and afforded the most secure route for transport, there too aboriginal inhabitants were numerous and powerful. It was this cause, which made the old Spaniards prefer working the mines of Potosi, though they are not more than a few miles in circumference, whilst it is affirmed those of Famatina are thirty leagues. In point of riches too, Potosi yields commonly but from six to twelve marks per box (Caxon), while Famatina gives from six to six hundred marks in the same quantity; moreover the territory of Fama-

tina had within its borders so few Spaniards compared to the number of savages, that every thing was in favour of Potosi, thus quicksilver was always carried there in preference to Famatina, on account of the risk, and a bank of exchange and mint were established from the same motive of security.

Rioja is 114 leagues from Cordova; 51 from Catamarca; 287 from Buenos Ayres; 130 from St. Luis; 109 from San Juan; 159 from Mendoza; 63 from Santiago de Chile; 130 from Guandacol; 110 from Santiago del Estero; 111 from Tucuman; 198 from Salta; and 207 from Jujuy.

CHAPTER III.

Cordova resumed—Civil government—Church influence—Society and opinions—Reception of a Peruvian Bishop—Ceremonies—Anecdote of the Bishop's treatment—Don Mariano Fragneira—Convents—Taking the Veil—The Alameda of Cordova—Effects of the climate on the human frame—Ladies' dress—Pascos—Mode of teaching a graceful walk to ladies—Jealousies of people of different states—Intellect of the inhabitants.

We will now resume the thread of our narrative, and return to Cordova. This city was once the see of a bishop, and is situated in a shallow valley.* The hills around are insignificant in size; but partially wooded, and kept in a state of excellent irrigation. The population, from the best source of information I could

* Lat. 31° 15″ S. Lon. 62° 5″ W.

obtain, in the absence of correct data, may be from eight to nine thousand, or perhaps ten.* It is united in federal government with Buenos Ayres, its convenient distance from which, its vicinity to the navigable river Parana, which falls into the Rio de la Plata, and the means of transit both by land and water, seems an excellent station for the establishment of a mining company. The granite hills in its vicinity afford abundant ores, and they possess the necessaries of wood, water, mules, and pasturage for cattle in abundance. The only impediment is the want of practical miners to teach the unemployed peasants of the country the rudiments of the art.

Cordova has a local independent government professedly civil, though under what may be styled a military authority. To be more ex-

* Ignacio Nunez rates the population of the city from twelve to sixteen thousand; of the province from seventy to eighty thousand.

plicit, there is no government that can be styled a civil police. It has, it is true, its chamber of representatives, which affects to be the dispenser of justice, and the guardian of civil right, and by which the president governor, as executive chief, should be returned. But, upon a recent occasion, on the termination of the triennial service of Colonel Bustos in the foregoing capacity, the feebleness of the Chamber's influence in support of another candidate, was evinced by a show of bayonets in favour of the Colonel, in defiance of the popular representative. Under these forcible demonstrations of feeling, the old soldier perhaps acted wisely in accepting office, though he was much censured by the supreme government for so doing, as well as by many of the most respectable citizens. It was deemed an act of usurpation on his part, though it cannot be doubted that it averted much evil, and prevented the anarchy which might otherwise have followed. It should appear

that in countries which have just raised themselves from a state of despotism to freedom, and its concomitant blessings, some time must elapse before the mass of the people can understand their situation, and repress within due limits the inclination to excess. The patriotic party frequently acts by its influence upon the feelings of its supporters, without the latter comprehending the true principles of the new order of things. The partisans of the old system are ready to foment discord, in any way that may lead to confusion, and through that to some hoped-for counter-revolution, by which they may profit; and, finally, three-fourths of the clergy, under the plea of religion, make temporal objects their sole end, act upon the fears of the superstitious, threaten the wavering, and anathematize the refractory, in order to secure support in every new disturbance, by which they themselves may obtain the return of their old wealth without service, and their ancient un-

controlable power without responsibility. In Cordova the society is a strange mixture. One fourth of the people are friends of liberty, in the fullest sense of the term, even to excess of wildness; another fourth are led any way, and completely in the halter of their party; the next fourth may be said only to have the snaffle in their jaws; while the last portion is under whip and spur, and rode with the old monkish curb.

The diversity of sentiment and opinion, to which this state of things gives rise, is by no means characterised by the exterior of the people at large. The same grave deportment is preserved at the Funcion, Mèsa, and Confesion. Still even the relics of the papal edifice and of Spanish tyranny are secretly mouldering, and they fall one after another, without any external signs sufficiently obvious to alarm the observer, who would arrest the progress of their destruction. From Cordova

the abolition of the fees of the church has gradually spread throughout the united provinces of Peru. It was impossible, however, not to remark the want of personal attention observable on the occasion of the Bishop of La Paz passing through the city on his route from Upper Peru, whence he had been driven to embark at Buenos Ayres for Old Spain. If it were reasonable to feel regret for the decay of any church, the object of which was its own temporal ambition and emoluments, and the oppression, and superstitious misleadings of its people, it must have been felt here. The doctors, canons, and friars, more especially the Franciscans, to which order the prelate belonged, swelled his train, and did their best to inspire respect. Every effort of the expiring influence of the church was exerted. A grand Bishop's Mass was celebrated with all the pomp, parade, and circumstance of the Romish ritual, the impressive grandeur of which was overawing to the senses; but the people

were far more intent on examining the person of this mean looking little ecclesiastic during the ceremony of mitring and robing, than on any act of devotion.

It had been so long since a service of the preceding nature had been witnessed at Cordova, that the master of the ceremonies had become rusty from disuse. He was several times at fault in attiring the bishop, at which the latter was evidently embarrassed. At the close of mass, he was again divested of his gorgeous frocking, and passing down the aisle of the cathedral, dispensed his blessing, but in a manner neither graceful nor dignified. At last he hurried from the edifice, as if mortified with receiving no other shew of deference, than a sly glance or two of adoration from an old *Beatifica*,* and the beggarly implorings of some palsied kneeling Incurables. He was followed across the Plaza, by a few noisy boys, yelping "El

* A female devotee *Voute au blanc.*

Obispo! El Obispo!" a degradation which the prelate should have been spared, by the provision of a carriage. This Misa de Gracia was succeeded a day or two afterwards by a grand procession, which obliged almost the whole city to come down on its knees. All the church influence in the place, was put in requisition for this occasion, to obtain demonstrations of respect. The procession moved from the cathedral with sacerdotal pomp, and was nearly two hours performing the circuit of the Plaza. The time was filled up with the elevation of the host by the bishop, at altars erected at the corners of the square, and gaudily decorated with half the valuables, private and public, of the city. The governor and members of the Cabildo,* and others, who followed the bishop with wax lights, seemed to view this pious pantomime as the last that would ever be exhibited there, and to be now granted rather as a

* Council, or Chapter.

tribute to fallen greatness than from any respect to the ceremony itself, which was truly worthy an age of the darkest superstition. The women, of whom there was a vast concourse, gave it, by their devout demeanour and sparkling eyes, an interest of which it would not otherwise have been susceptible in the view of an Englishman not of the same faith.

The last public act of the Bishop of La Paz was that of confirmation; it occupied several days, from a notion industriously spread abroad, that no son of San Pedro thus directly and explicitly authorized would ever again visit Cordova. In consequence every body was confirmed. Sucking infants were borne in the arms of their mothers, and doomed, as infants never were before, (at least, as I imagine, they never were), to stand in the shoes of their god-papas and god-mammas! The good priest, however, observing the mania that had seized his flock, seemed to think seriously of number

one, in doing which the brotherhood are never deficient, and to calculate the fatigue he must undergo. He doubtless administered unction of any sort, and in any way, to those who pressed forward to receive it, and thus hastened to disengage himself from the bleatings of his flock as soon as was practicable.

The distaste shown to this prelate by the people of Cordova, arose more from his adhesion to the cause of old Spain, than from his episcopal character—this was clear, and was exhibited in an affair not very creditable to those concerned in it. It was, of course, necessary for the prelate to have a sufficient quantity of the currency to proceed on his journey, and he despatched his servant with fifty ounces of gold, that he might get silver in exchange. The scrivener who undertook to furnish the change, which would take some time to collect in rials, half, and quarter rials, shuffled off the business from day to day, till at length the pre-

late, prudently dreading the effect of litigation, abandoned his money, and proceeded on his journey. Previous to so doing, however, he sent a servant, as a last effort to endeavour by fair means to regain a portion of his money; but the swindling scrivener reminded the messenger of a scriptural passage, which he bade him repeat to his master, hoping that in it there would be found ample consolation, namely, "I was a stranger and they took me in." There is not the smallest sympathy felt in South America for a loyalist,* not a particle more than the king and monks of old Spain feel for a refractory colonist of Spanish America, except that in America they will not take his life, by which they have the balance of humanity in their favour. This sharper was extolled for his shrewdness and wit, and the poor old priest laughed at for his credulity. I do not mean that a sharper of this description at Cordova

* Termed *Godo*.

would not be compelled by the laws to make restitution, had the bishop applied to an authority for redress; but he himself judged it more discreet to put up with the loss than take such a step, lest it should lead to a knowledge of the contents of his travelling equipage, and the *rouleaux* he still had in his possession.

With all the foregoing indifference towards a dignitary of the church, the ecclesiastical influence is perhaps more powerful at Cordova than in any other place in South America. It is still superior there, both to the executive and legislative authority; as a proof of which, I may instance the following circumstance, which occurred during my residence in that city. The church in its quota of representatives had included one of those unbending bigots, whose fiery and ambitious spirit of orthodoxy admits not of the slightest innovation upon the church's supremacy, and whose zeal rages fiercely upon every meeting occasion. This zealot had ren-

dered himself obnoxious to the liberal party, and being anonymously lampooned in a vulgar way he discovered at last that the author was an opposition member of the chamber, whose character was by no means one of the best. The churchman refused to attend the house of assembly as usual, and was then cited to appear personally, and answer for his conduct. To this citation, he replied, that in his eyes the house was a corrupt assembly, and he would not degrade himself by attending its sittings. This refusal gave rise to a debate of considerable acrimony, and a search was made after precedents for his arrest, but none could be found that would affect a member of the church. An appeal was next made to the executive; but the governor was really possessed of too little power to interfere, or dreaded the consequences of embroiling himself especially having been lately charged with an act of aggression himself. At this stage of the proceedings the defendant, having

displayed the power of the church, and feeling the inconvenience that might accrue to the public from a reiterated refusal, appeared in the assembly, and established the ground-work of his charge against the whole chamber, by accusing one of its members of mal-practices, especially in the character of a public defaulter. The charge not being refuted, a motion was made for the expulsion of the delinquent from the house, which it is needless to say, was carried. Thus the affair terminated, proving the city of Cordova to be still under the domination of the Church, notwithstanding the political changes which had taken place.

The cathedral of Cordova, constructed after the Moorish Gothic fashion, is an imposing edifice. There are still existing in the city convents of all the orders. There is also a college, once the property of the Jesuits, and devoted to learning as taught by them; but this is now reduced to the level of a mere preparatory school,

for want, as its present polite governor assured me, of competent professors, and funds to provide for them. The rich and extensive estates with which it was endowed have gone to decay, since the grand staple trade of Cordova, namely that in mules with Peru, has been extinguished by the war. One cannot help regretting to see in so fine a country so many objects capable of improvement, and of giving sustenance and comfort to a numerous population, as well as wealth to the capitalist, lying neglected for want of money to reinstate them. Various tempting propositions and offers were made me, of the finest estates, which in a few years would have repaid the original purchase money. At present Cordova can be considered little more than the first toll-gate on the road to Peru. Every thing is flat and at a stand-still. There will ere long be a revival without doubt; but its progress must be slow from the want of pecuniary means.

There are several spirited individuals in Cor-

dova who will not suffer what is within their power and influence to retrograde. To one of these public characters, Don Mariano Fragueira, I was indebted for many personal civilities, as well as for the gratification of witnessing his efforts for restoring his native city to its pristine wealth and consideration. Don Mariano not only followed the occupation of a merchant, but I was pleased to discover had found leisure to attend to manufactures also. He established a tan-yard and currier's shop; and what was my surprise on visiting his works, to find three or four of my countrymen actively labouring there. They showed me specimens of boot-leggings equal to the best British in appearance; but it was their opinion, from the fineness of the climate, that they would never imbibe the tanning so well. This I verified in wearing a pair of Cordovese boots, which sell at from two to three dollars a pair. In point of workmanship and appearance, they were equal to any that Hoby could

turn out, and in a dry climate would last as long; but the leather is by no means water-proof; it is far more pervious than the English. I found that there were a number of Frenchmen and other foreigners at Cordova, employed in the different branches of profession and trade, which have been established by the liberal system and patriotic efforts of Don Mariano, affording a happy contrast to the narrow and cautious spirit as to improvement which is evinced in other parts of South America.

I have before noticed that Cordova abounds with convents and nunneries, the gloomy quadrangles of which darken the best parts of the city, giving an idea to the stranger that they compose one half of its buildings. The most injurious consequence of the prevalence of the Catholic faith in any country, is, next to its opposition to the march of freedom, the encouragement of idleness and the repression of industry, by devoting its members to purposes that take

them out of the sphere of common life, from the promotion of the welfare of the body politic. In a country like South America that cannot be fully peopled for many ages, where plenty might be rendered universal by a little well-timed industry, and the boon of independence is not beyond the reach of any who, with small means, will persevere in its pursuit, what can be more impolitic than to shut up women as nuns, and to maintain an idle set of male devotees in a state of celibacy, at the cost of those who labour! The dogmas of the Catholic creed are here at open variance with the first law of nature, the happiness of mankind. The mind sickens at such a system. A superabundant body, maintained by the industry of any community, and returning no benefit, is an excrescence which should be shaved down. The hundreds of lazy monks and friars, that swarm in idleness, encourage vice, and are often, for money, the profligate tools of the base and

corrupt, and panders to the sensual appetites of the most depraved, are utterly incompatible with good government and well regulated society. The use made of convents by the Spaniards and Portuguese is abhorrent to our common feelings. These establishments have been found a convenient provision for a daughter in order that her portion of dower may revert to more favoured children; and this unjustifiable use of them has been a great cause of their continued existence. Most of the nunneries in these countries are sinks of profligacy, under cover of religion. In Cordova the daughters of some of the first families are immured in such establishments, in violence to social happiness. I was present at the ceremony of taking the veil by a novice in that city, and I will detail what I saw, and the disgust I felt at a most barbarous act of Romish superstition. I was indebted for the sight to my friend, Doctor Theodoro L*****.

This ceremony began about nine o'clock in the morning by the celebration of mass; which, being concluded, the congregation present was allowed to ascend the steps which led from the area of the church to the altar, and to approach as near as was commodious to the grated *sanctum sanctorum*, which at other times cut off the secluded sisterhood from observation. Over this grated recess, as over hell gates, might have been not inappropriately inscribed, the celebrated line of Dante—

"Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate;

for she who takes the veil, leaves "hope behind," indeed. The breathing world, the glory of the heavens, the gorgeous hues of nature, the festival and dance, the social delights of her fellow beings, are to her a sealed book. "Ever-during dark" surrounds her; the tomb itself is more desirable than this living inhumation, which only "keeps alive despair." In front of the recess, which was sufficiently gloomy, sat the patron

fathers, in easy chairs, emblems of the sloth of the profession, and examples of good living. They were dressed in canonical robes, of rich Peruvian embroidery, glittering with gold. Apt symbols these of the simplicity of original Christianity! They supported a white cowled capuchin of La Merced. The very sight of these jolly priests was designed (admirably adapted for the purpose, no doubt) to elevate the imagination of the novice, or rather victim, to heaven and its promised inheritance. What absurdities are too great for the superstitious from habit and education to swallow!

The sisterhood of the convent had moved into their chapel, previous to our admission from the aisle. The interior of the space in which they were, was almost opaque to the eye that approached it from the glare of day in the body of the church. Two lines of faint stars, equidistant and parallel with each other, were all that were visible at first, with a leading one in

the centre. In a few minutes, when the sight became adapted to the dimness around, the candles were traced downwards from the flame to the outlines of the twenty-one human figures sustaining them, entirely enveloped in white. An interval of perfect silence first took place. This was soon broken by the sound of low and distant music, which swelled by degrees higher and higher in tones of solemn melancholy, and then died away in like manner until they were lost, in silence, deathly as that which reigned before they commenced. The ghostly father then began an oration, admirably adapted to reconcile the novice to her new circumstances, to calm her feelings, and keep up her spirits, delivered in language that, for gravity and pomp, could not be surpassed, and with admirable modulation of voice. He thus kept us upon our knees on the cold slabs, for nearly two hours. The substance and sense of his address might be comprised in the oft repeated con-

solatory conclusion of many of his periods, "that it was infinitely better to abide in the house of the Lord, than to dwell in the courts of the ungodly."

At the termination of the foregoing address, the fair devotee, who had remained all this time in a posture of adoration before a crucifix, being relieved of the wax taper which she held in her hand, flung herself prostrate on the floor of the church, in token of her humility, even to the dust. Whilst in this position, she received absolution for all her past indiscretions and sins, and a passport to a life of penance and perpetual chastity. She arose after this, was uncovered, and led between two of the sisterhood to a wicket formed in the grating, just large enough to admit the reception of the veil, which was presented on a tray to the holy father. It was then placed upon her head, with a suitable exhortation to conform to the duties of the sacred character with which she was invested by it. After

this, a crown of flowers, which seemed exquisitely garlanded and grouped, was placed over all, like a wreath upon a sepulchre. There appeared a good deal of anxiety in those present to observe in particular this interesting part of the ceremony, and how she received the veil; I was at the opposite side of the wicket, and not close enough to see it minutely; nor could I gather whether she received a clerical salutation on her being made one of the blest, or only a low word of chaste advice; but a momentary union of the veil and cowl, as well as I could observe, seemed to me to happen.

The wicket was now closed, and the newly initiated one was conducted immediately in front of the rest. The sisters retired in order, to seats regularly arranged on each side the interior of the recess, so that the newly made nun was left alone in such a position that a light which she held should fall full upon her countenance.

Whether her features were more beautiful and interesting from the associations of the moment, I cannot pretend to divine; but they appeared to me to beam with an ineffable smile of satisfaction and peace upon all around. Her parting relatives and friends wept, and the incitors to such an unnatural sacrifice ought also to have been touched.

"What a cruel action!" I ejaculated to myself, as this pretty young creature stood thus before me, her spirits artfully calmed and beguiled by music as etherial as it could be made, to Handel's beautiful air of "Waft her, angels, to the skies"—"what a cruel action to cut off this lovely blossom from its surrounding flowers, from the free air of heaven, under which she might have become the brightest!—to sever her from life, from the duties of an affectionate wife and mother, to change her from being a benefactor to her country, to a useless weed in the social field!" She did not appear more than eighteen

years of age. What years of comfort and happiness might she not have had in the world! The life of a cloister, even where it is not rendered licentious by the priests, is almost invariably one of misery, of secret feuds and contests fed by idleness and envy. What a fatal thing, that it should be varnished over with so much of the pomp and circumstance of religion to conceal its deformity!

Having exhibited herself for about five minutes, or more, in the way I have mentioned, the ceremony concluded by her embracing each of the sisterhood separately as they sat in their places, from the lady abbess downwards. This she seemed to do with more or less of endearment, according to her preference of feeling for each, and with an air of great grace and elegance, which was even touching. After this the sisterhood retired two and two, with an affecting solemnity, in accordance with the gravity of the music. The fathers moved off with an air

of triumph on their plump visages, and as though they had achieved an act acceptable to the Creator of the world. Thus this poor girl ended her existence with all beyond the convent walls: well for her if,

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

I shall not, however, easily forget her, or the last scene in which she figured before the world and me.

The hasty way in which I noted down the few things which the hurry of my visit to South America allowed me to record, and any want of order in their arrangement, will, I trust, be overlooked, when it is considered that I lay no claim to the character of a travelling author. My object was business, my journey was rapid; my observations are, therefore, desultory as they occurred. I state this, lest I should be accused of not being minute enough, or of ranging too widely from object to object. Thus I have al-

ready mentioned the Alameda, or public walk at Buenos Ayres: I will now notice that of Cordova.

The Alameda is situated at one extremity of the city. It is a most agreeable promenade, the best I have seen in South America. Its form is square, with regular avenues of trees, and stone seats between them. There is a fine sheet of water in the centre, and also a temple or pavilion, to which parties frequently go and form *pic-nics*. Besides the numbers of pretty women and cavaliers who promenade there, during the delicious evenings of that fine latitude, there is a fund of amusement for the curious stranger in viewing the groupes of women, who repair thither from the suburbs for water. There they crack their jokes, and hold their gossip together, and then walk away with large vases upon their heads of elegant shape, made of the clay of the country. Though full to the brim, they manage never to spill a drop; yet the base of the vessel

tapers away, and is inserted in a pad. When empty, they have a custom of carrying them on one side, which at a distance gives them the appearance of soldiers with sharpshooters' caps.

A common remark made by travellers, is no where better exemplified than at Cordova; it is that the graceful movements and pliant powers of the human body always keep pace with the luxuriance of the climate. The individuals of the motley groupe which visits the Alameda, possess a symmetry which ladies of our northern climate might well envy, and that without the trouble of strait lacing. Their carriage and manners agree with their elegance of form, and are never constrained, being strictly natural. The ladies of Cordova are adepts in the use of their fine eyes, which they know how to manage with terrible effect. They likewise practise the old fashioned exercise of the fan as adroitly as their neighbours, the Porteños,* and

* People of Buenos Ayres.

have a much better theatre in the Alameda for the display of their proficiency in it. The governor's band plays on the esplanade from four o'clock until dusk, during what may be styled here the fashionable season, when the walks are always crowded, and the benches present the appearance of full dressed opera boxes. A lace kerchief of the most costly fabric possible, attached to a bright Berenice knot at the top of the crown, plays with a Madonna-like negligence about the face and neck, which it half conceals, while it shades and gives additional interest to the loveliest forms and features. A hat or bonnet is never seen on a lady's head, except when in equestrian dress; in which she always appears to the greatest disadvanage, dowdy and rustic. A couple of beaux from Buenos Ayres arrived at Cordova during my stay, and contributed a great deal to the gaiety of the city. A round of balls and *converzationes* gave them an opportunity of distributing their favours

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with a liberality which astonished the Cordoveses. These gentlemen represented a company at Buenos Ayres, formed to procure a monopoly of the Famatina and other mines. Occasional *Paseos** were given at their instance. At one of the latter I was present. It was nothing more than an excursion on horseback, about a league and a half from the city, to a country-house, the property of the celebrated Dean Funes, a member of the Congress, and author of a work on the rise and progress of the South American Revolution.

We set off after an early dinner, a cavalcade of about twenty equestrians, comprising together the mothers, grandmothers, and aunts of the young ladies, in carriages. Custom has not yet sanctioned the licence of unmarried ladies being out of sight of their relatives until the matrimonial knot is tied. When they are married, they have escaped, as it were, from an im-

* Pic-nic parties.

prisonment. The consequence of all this is, that they do not settle down into good wives so easily as women in England, who are allowed more licence before marriage, and whom education and good breeding render responsible. In England, self-respect inspires a confidence, and gives a character of stability, self-importance, and self-reliance unknown to unmarried women here; a far better guarantee these to parents of their children's virtue before marriage, and to husbands after.

We rode in the confused manner through dirty lanes and rough broken fields, that fox-hunters ride in England. In short, this Pasco was more like a fox-chase than any thing else I can compare it to. On our arrival, an interesting exhibition of cavalier address took place in dismounting the ladies. On the party alighting at the ruinous, barbarous, and apparently long deserted structure, the ladies upon entering the saloon were quickly put to the route by a host of

fleas, its only inmates. The pretty feet and ancles of the Señoritas, of which they are justly vain, were attacked with a ferocity which made them cry out, and afford at the same time an unconscious exhibition of their agility, and a partial display of the symmetry of those limbs on which they so much pride themselves. I could not help thinking what a wretched defence my country women would have made in such a case, though they would have attempted it notwithstanding, rather than, like these damsels, have accepted auxiliary aid to disperse the enemy.

We lingered near this spot about an hour, culling flowers and simples, and making mutual exchanges of them in token of admiration or respect. A few of the party who had rambled into a neighbouring vineyard having rejoined us, we proceeded to take refreshments, and while so doing, a vast deal of joking and merriment took place at each other's expense, which gave a zest to our collation. We then galloped

back to Cordova, and entering the city pell-mell, caused such a clattering through the thinly populated streets, that we astonished the peaceable inhabitants, who were here and there grouped together outside their houses, enjoying the serene atmosphere and cloudless sky of evening in this delicious climate. This is a part of the day so beautiful, that usage never makes its enjoyment pall upon the senses, and the exquisite pleasure it affords cannot be guessed by those who live in an atmosphere uncertain and clouded as our own.

The action of the horses trained for ladies' use is peculiar; they are taught by a hide tether fastened to their fetlocks, which obliges them to move with a pace which may be styled a species of dog-trot, rather than any thing else, or it may be compared to the amble of our own horses. In South America I observed that this practice was not confined alone to animals. I was informed that young ladies were formerly (if not

at present, in some old-fashioned corners of the country,) treated in a similar manner; and really if the inimitable gait of the South American ladies be attributable to this mode of drilling them to use their legs, the art is well worth adopting in England, and has the advantage of being quickly learnt. For example, let the careful mamma take her daughter's ancles and noose them with ribbons of the requisite lengths for the step required. Next, chalk the floor at the distances, and in the figure which taste may dictate. On one side of the room a scale of inches may be laid down corresponding to the figures by which to increase the length, size, and time, *secundum artem*. Now set the little Miss going, and watch her carriage and the pointing of her toes as she proceeds, which may be adjusted or rectified at pleasure after the latest and most approved law of fashion, and according to the rules of attitude and gesture of Sebastiano Fandango. In the course of a dozen lessons the

young lady will be an adept and able to parade on an English Alameda with the majestic air of a South American belle.

The houses in Cordova are for the most part flat-roofed, and are built very substantially upon the model introduced by the first settlers from the old world, as soon as they became established. They generally consist of several quadrangles upon the basement story, with an entrance which the French denominate a *porte cochère.* Over this entrance there is often a couple or three rooms. On the whole, the houses are fitted for the climate, secure against earthquakes, and suit well the purposes of hospitality. The quadrangle which is occupied by the chief members of the family, is well adapted for domestic convenience, and really comfortable, cut off from the effluvia of the kitchen, and at night retired from the noise of the domestics or late visitors to any of the inmates. To sum up all, the house of a Spaniard of the respectable class of society at

Cordova is not to be undervalued either for its conveniencies or its internal arrangements.

There appeared to me to be a sort of rivalship between the provincial states through which I travelled, which leads the natives of one district to disparage those of another, and which operates to prevent a general family compact and bond of union between them. This appearance is calculated to give a foreigner an unfavourable idea of the people. Perhaps it is only to be dated from the long political troubles, which brought parties into hostility against each other, and which time alone can remove. Indeed it was scarcely to be expected that the violent shock the revolution occasioned, should take place without something of this nature; and I only wonder the effects of it were so limited in character as I discovered them to be. The Cordovese is not reputed to possess the high spirit, the fine tact, and the genius of either the Porteño, or the Tucumanese. But it must not be forgot-

ten that Cordova had long been the head-quarters of the church, and latterly the sink of fugitives and renegade friars from all parts of the provinces. It is not, therefore, surprising that the Cordoveses, almost the last relieved from the tyranny of Spain, ecclesiastical and secular, should hold but a secondary place in intellectual qualifications among the people of their Continent. The head-quarters of the civil and ecclesiastical power of Spain, must of necessity be among people the grossest in ignorance, since, to render all within the sphere of their influence blind and bigotted, credulous and superstitious, cruel and arrogant, was ever the sole labour of both. Knowledge and liberal opinion are the most deadly of their enemies. The shortest way of governing, according to the old Spaniards, was to make men brutes, and when this was accomplished by the priest, the civil authority could never be challenged in any of the antics that have so often made the "heavens weep."

In the members of the Lozano family with which I had the pleasure of sojourning, during my stay in Cordova, there was proof of much natural talent, and no absence of application, particularly as respected the science and practice of music. The young ladies played some of Mozart's difficult sonatas, with reference to time and expression, as though they had been taught by superior masters, they assuredly displayed great natural taste and genius. The conclusion I should come to, from the limited opportunities I had of judging, would be, that there is no deficiency of power among the Cordoveses; that nature has no more neglected them than others, but that they have been retarded by the bigotry and chains of the mother country, and that time will shew how much superior they are to the parent people, while the latter remain, as at present—the Goths of Europe.

CHAPTER IV.

Route continued—Virtue of a Cigar—The Jesuits—Sinsacate—Ojo de Agua—Locusts—Decrease of population—flocks and sheep breeding—The Algarroba tree, and juice—Pampa Grande—A Gaucho dandy—Untoward accident—Equestrian exhibition—Crossing the Saladillo—Singular phenomenon in the woods—The Paca Blanca—The Biscacho—The Lady of Atchabal—Horrible spectacle—Arrival at Santiago.

HAVING waited at Cordova the arrival of a second mail from Buenos Ayres, I determined to proceed on my journey into Upper Peru, which by the death of General Oleñeta, and the destruction of the last royalist force in the country, presented the finest and richest field of mining operations in South America.

On the 23d of June, I took leave of my ex-

cellent and kind friends, the Lozanos, and started for Tucuman, by a *Virloche** or land carriage, having for companions, a brother of my fellow traveller from Buenos Ayres, Mr. B. Lozano, and my former assistant, Mr. Menoya. This method of travelling was recommended to me, as the most agreeable and least expensive, on a calculation that the carriage would sell at Salta the last stage, for twice as much as it cost here. Of this mode of journeying, I began at first to repent, for our way lay over a miserable stony road that every instant seemed to threaten destruction to our wheels. The country wore much the appearance of a mineral district, presenting for eight leagues a succession of granite hills, which terminated at Chacarita. At this place we thought ourselves comfortably lodged for the night. We had a good supper, and all seemed to augur well. Alas! how fallacious are the

* A carriage with two wheels.

best appearances! In one hour after retiring to our place of repose, I found we were destined to be flead alive before morning. When the day broke, we rose, not in the most pleasant humour, and summoned the master of the post-house. He soon came to us half awake, with a candle, the thing we most wanted.

"Many fleas here, Sir!" said one of our party. "Yes, Sir," the post-master replied, with the most provoking sang froid, and as if these miseries were a blessing. "Benchucas also!" added the first speaker, with most amusing coolness. Our host answered, "A few, Sir, only," as though it was a sort of ill fortune. This speech was a most irritating wind-up, for there was no joke in being bled to death by the Toledos of such indefatigable light infantry, and a truce was out of the question.

On the 24th, we roused the capitaz and peons before their usual time. They were

sleeping in their field bed, like peg tops, under the canopy of the carriage. "Happy rascals," I exclaimed, as I stirred them up with my feet, "the Benchucas have not murdered your sleep —you repose as soundly as Duncan in spite of these gluttons in blood; what would I not have given to have slept as well; what a 'fitful fever' has the night been to us!" The capitaz yawned and deliberately muttered "*Caraco!*"* at the idea of turning out at such an early hour. Upon my asking, how he would like to have been amused all night as we had been, he cynically replied, "*Quien sabe!*"† "Quien sabe, indeed!" I answered; but restraining my feelings, I offered him a paper cigar, a compliment to one of these poor fellows of more value in his eyes than an ounce of gold. This gift turned the tide of affairs in a moment. With a look of good nature, and "mil gracias, Señor!" he in-

* A common oath of the country.

† "Who knows!" the reply to every question.

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stantly bestirred himself. In a few minutes, we had taken our coffee, and commenced our journey, just as the sun broke upon the tops of the mineral hills around. So much for the presentation of a paper cigar, and its encouraging effect! But though given to a peon of the country, it must be tendered with a cavalier air of the old Spanish school, or it will lose half its virtue. Of such importance sometimes are the most insignificant trifles in contributing to our comforts.

The scenery upon which we shortly entered, soon made me forget the virtues of the cigar on which I had been so recently musing. Other sights appeared connected with that extraordinary state between bliss and its opposite, which good catholics denominate purgatory, and the pains of which I thought I had tasted the preceding night. The view of the ruins of a Jesuit's establishment at that moment, it was, that thus turned the current of my thoughts. The spot, highly

favored by nature, was once the pride of art, but had now become a monument of decay. Many dilapidated fabrics, mouldering aqueducts, fields fruitful in wild flowers and weeds, were before and around me, presenting a melancholy picture; but they were relics of a sect whose union of knowledge with superstition and despotism, arose to my recollection, and prevented any deep feeling of regret at the ruins of a temple of bigotry. Here (I thought, as we drove up to the skeleton remains of the once noble establishment of Sinsacate,) are the sad reliques of the most artful and comprehensive system, which the ingenuity of man has devised for subverting the best principles of our common nature, and reducing the human intellect to barbarous dependence on the wills of designing men and soul degrading dogmas, for the profit of a few—no, I could not pity its fate. Though here neglected, the ruins would in Europe have been converted into something more useful or

honourable—perchance a cotton factory, or a Lancasterian school. There was the chapel, the humiliating confessional, and the man-entrapping niche, where the credulous committed their secret sins to crafty ears, to be used against themselves for political purposes. The spacious aisles, where a thousand devotees might have worshipped, presented a scene at once silent and desolate; scarcely two hundred out of a numerous population now survived. The land had been purged, and the return of better days was yet to come. In the orchard and gardens the olive and the vine now ran to waste. The funeral yew threw its ominous shadow over empty cells and fractured walls. Where are now the holy fathers? Are they interceding for the soul of Charles III., and those who with him effected in an hour the destruction of the fabric of ages, the downfall of the brotherhood?—"Quien sabe!" is the only answer to this. But it is not "quien sabe!" with the consequences of the decree for the

abolition of the order of the Jesuits here. With the same blow that annihilated the Jesuits, the industry and population which they had attached to their home were laid waste also. Charles began the sap of the papal power, and through that laid the axe to the root of monarchy itself in his transatlantic dominions. The reign of Ferdinand, styled the "beloved" and "pious" in Madrid, and in America with better justice the "accursed," has witnessed the concluding scene of the retributive drama. The brightest jewel has fallen from his crown; perhaps he does not perceive that he is shorn of his glories; he feels not how his throne totters! Ere long he may fall headlong, and America loftily exclaim, from north to south—

So perish all
Who would men by man enthral!

The succeeding owners of Sinsacate, judging from the neglected state of the domain, seem

to have been utterly indifferent to the extensive field of improvement which its former occupants cultivated. The quantity of silver utensils, and the abundant fare which the present owner afforded his travelling guests, and that free of charge, evince how rich and plentiful must have been the crumbs that fell from the Jesuits' table. It is curious to remark the utter want of interest displayed by the South Americans, the present possessors of this property, in regard to any relics or records of the brotherhood that may yet exist.

Our host was a remarkably handsome old Spaniard of seventy-five years of age, who must have watched the turn of political affairs very circumspectly, to be situated as he was. He could give us little or no information respecting his predecessors. He told us, indeed, that we were then enjoying ourselves in the very apartment where the sleek and portly fathers of the most roguish of monkish orders, practised their

secret frauds, and combined to overawe empires and enslave mankind; but this was all. The edifice itself was constructed on a terrace, commanding an extensive prospect over a most noble country, now uncultivated and running wild. The Señora, its mistress, with a fine healthy progeny surrounding her, seemed to pride herself only upon her lord, than whom she was twenty years younger.

It was no sooner known that we had arrived, than the whole of the village hard by came to take a peep at the English. Among them was an old soldier of Beresford's army, who had come to pay his respects, bringing with him a very lovely young woman of eighteen, his daughter. He said he was a Scotsman, and had never written to, nor heard from any part of his family since he quitted his country. He was conveyed as a prisoner with many others into the interior, where, having obtained his liberty, he married and settled. He was a

sort of *major-domo* on the estate here. Our host informed us he conducted himself very well, and was a pattern for the natives. He was much pleased to see us, and once more to shake hands with a countryman. He said he was very happy, having a good wife and five children, and also some thousands of dollars to leave them. That perhaps, when he had increased his dollars a little more, he might hope to spend some part of his latter days in England. Thus is the remembrance of his early home so twined round the heart of the remotest way-wanderer from his native soil, that no lapse of time can deprive him of the recollection.

We travelled this day fifty miles, and slept at a place called Ojo de Agua, from its being a spring. The post-house at the Ojo de Agua afforded good fare, and we slept soundly without a single interruption from the vampire Benchucas.

On the 25th of June we had, during our

journey, a continuation of fine scenery with more remains of Jesuitical industry. This order certainly possessed a remarkable facility of converting the most barren soil into good productive ground, which they effected by an admirable system of irrigation, always choosing the most excellent position for their labours. During the greater part of this day our course lay over a sandy desert, on an intolerably bad road. We travelled in consequence only about twelve leagues, and stopped at night at Santa Cruz, in a steril country, though a somewhat romantic position. The post-master, finding we were travelling upon mining business, sent his sons to bring us specimens from some hills in the neighbourhood, which were said to abound in minerals. They proved not to be worth notice, of which, however, we could not convince him. He had taken his opinion from traditions and periodical noises heard there, which the ladies of his family likened to dismal groans. These

unaccountable phenomena, he insisted, were never-failing tokens of the ground in the neighbourhood where they were heard being rich in minerals.

The young ladies of our host's establishment, for they appeared such when dressed, though on our arrival they looked quite a different set of beings, were going to a "bayle del pais." They regretted we should have come to the house on a day when they were so engaged, an engagement too that occurred but once a year. They would fain have had us accompany them to the fête, a distance of eight miles out of our route: We were obliged to excuse ourselves as courteously as we could; and, instead of such a pleasure, to pass our evening in listening to the marvellous goblin tales and superstitious stories of our credulous host and hostess. The occupation of the master of the house was that of a goatherd, miller and baker united. We were treated with fine new

bread, excellent milk, and roasted kid, which was extremely delicious; we had also wine, a rare commodity here, which had travelled all the distance from Rioja.

On the 26th we breakfasted upon goat's milk and started early in the morning. After a few leagues were passed, we got into a fertile country, though now barren. This seeming contradiction is explained by my stating that a flight of locusts had laid it waste. I had never before witnessed such a sight. Of all the plagues of Egypt, I now think that of locusts must have been the most horrible. This pest, which we had previously seen before us like a dense cloud upon the horizon, became, upon our arrival in contact with it, a serious impediment to our progress. The locusts struck the faces of our horses and peons with such force and in such numbers that they could scarcely grope their way along. Every bush was alive with them, and in an instant looked dried up and

dead from their devastations. Their appearance, three or four feet above the ground, resembled corn under the action of the wind when glowing in a meridian sun, or the undulating vapour of the mirage, or the prismatic waving of a summer's sea. Our landlord had told us in the morning that a flight of locusts had passed by without visiting him, forgetting that his ground afforded nothing for them to settle upon but rocks and the prickly pear and torch thistle, upon which these giant grass-hoppers showed no inclination to impale themselves, not even for a collector of natural history, or the miller's amateur friends in that line of study!

What an awful visitation to the country over which they pass, is the flight of these insects; before whose baleful influence

"The full-blown spring
Through all her foliage shrinks,
Joyless and dead, a wide dejected waste!"

A scene in the morning rich in verdure and

bursting into blossoms, is at night a dreary, profitless, hideous waste.

On the next morning not a green blade nor a leaf meets the eye, where yesterday nature revelled in luxuriance of beauty. Happy is England which this scourge never visits! It cost us full three hours to get clear of these marauders. We calculated that they must have extended fully twelve miles from north to south; how far in the lateral direction, "quien sabe!" as our capitaz said. We came to a patch of steril, hilly country again, and there we parted from the insects who seemed passing to the westward, preferring the valley. Never had I before seen, and I hope I never shall again see, such a district of utter desolation as we passed this day, during which we travelled sixteen leagues. We alighted just before sun-set at a place called Pozo del Tigre.

It was only at stations as remote from each other as this and the last, that any correct

judgment could be formed of the miserably scanty population of these provinces. It decreases as you proceed towards the interior, and becomes much more striking when the sum of human beings seen through the day consists of the post-master's family and his retainers! From such sources no intelligence can be obtained upon any subject, not even a local one. The lord of the Pozo del Tigre, an apathetic personage, could give no other reply to the most simple queries but the truly hacknied "quien sabe!" Such was the answer of this, our new host, to every thing. His travelling was bounded by that of his flock; and a journey once a year to Cordova, or Santiago del Estero, to dispose of his fleece, is the history of his life. A Gaucho boy having brought the landlord's flock to the fold for the night, we went, while dinner was preparing, to examine it. There were several hundred sheep intermingled with goats. Their issue was a strange

one, and it was almost impossible to distinguish the species of the produce, half goat and half sheep as many of them were. I took some pains to explain to Señor Quien sabe the impolicy of his system of breeding, as I pointed out the pyebald produce, a race yielding neither mutton nor goat's flesh, with a fleece between wool and hair. He contended that he was too old to begin a new system, although his wife was at that very moment swinging a fine infant, awake and laughing, on a piece of hide suspended from the beams of his habitation by the corners. Upon my questioning him on the number and value of his motley flock, he told me he had from eight hundred to a thousand "*mas o menos*," (more or less,) which he valued one with another, at four rials or about two shillings a-piece. I then asked him, supposing the flock consisted of a pure breed of sheep and goats, whether they would not be worth double the money, and the fleece twice as much. "No

se," (can't tell) was the reply. To my observation, respecting the propriety of separating the species, and removing the rams at the proper season, and the probability, if he did so, of increasing his flock two or three-fold, he replied with the eternal "quien sabe!" accompanied by a Spanish shrug, and a grave remark on the cruelty of separating man and wife. In short, I found it was useless to try to convince him of his ill management. The furniture of this man's house was miserable, consisting only of a few wooden chairs, a small table, and a chest or two instead of drawers. Notwithstanding this, our dinner was served up on massy silver plate; there was also a splendidly mounted crucifix of the same metal, with a halo or chaplet of pure gold over it, and a Santa Maria, with a virgin representation of Santa Isabel, as they denominated her. These saintesses were united on each side as supporters to the crucifix,

in rich embroidered dresses, with silk curtains to draw in front.

The mistress of the house joined occasionally in conversation, and appeared to consider household affairs more fitted to her sphere, than to the dignity of her spouse. She talked freely upon the mode in which their flocks were intermingled, and admitted on grounds of inconvenience, the folly of the custom. She shewed great interest when we related to her the care and attention paid to breeding animals in England, and added, that she should certainly refer the matter to the consideration of the curate of the parish.

The following day, the 27th of June, we were off at day-light. We travelled for the most part through a fine mellow country, with a slight sprinkling of population at intervals, but presenting every appearance of abject poverty, if one might judge from the miserable groupes of huts, which we observed near the road. These

dwellings consisted of three sides of mud wall. They were open in front, and a few rush mats, thrown across split bamboos, without any inclination to carry off the rain, formed the roof. As to inclemency of weather, it may be presumed these people are utter strangers to it, and that with them it is eternal summer. With them the cares of to-morrow never seemed to occupy a thought.

I observed here, that the algarroba, which is in general a stunted and ill-conditioned tree, grows to a prodigious height and breadth. It yields a juice which the natives call *Alaxa*: it is obtained by pressure from the berry. Our post-boys swallowed large quantities of it, with as much faith in its virtues as we have in spa-water, and with the same object in view. This beverage has much of the flavour of beer in a state of fermentation, and is used also as the only specific for the cure of an infamous disease, which has made a cruel waste among the popu-

lation. The disorder becomes hereditary, and every where traces of its havock may be witnessed. There is scarcely a hut in which some victim of its ravages may not be seen crawling about, and asking for a remedy to relieve him from his sufferings. No real antidote seems known here for this scourge of families, and its fearful effects may therefore be easily imagined.

The extent of this day's journey was sixty miles, which we might have increased to a hundred, but the situation of the post-horses would not, in that case, have allowed us to pass the river Saladillo before night. We therefore halted at an estate on the Pampa Grande early in the afternoon; the situation is well worthy of observation, it has all the capability of being rendered the centre of a noble domain. The house is placed upon an eminence, which takes the figure very nearly of a true amphitheatre. A river is contiguous, the rugged bed of which exhibits the ravages of the cataract torrents,

which pour at times from the adjacent mountains. Here the owner appears to be "Lord of all he surveys," from an eminence sloping gradually, till it loses itself in a magnificent plain in front. This plain is interspersed with numerous lakes, the resort of wild swans, geese, ducks, and myriads of other fowl, plying about unmolested. Such an estate in England could not be purchased for a million of dollars, yet the owner of this would gladly relinquish it all for five thousand, including his post-horses and cattle, together with his mongrel flocks, browsing in the valley of his superb domain.

The curate of a village some leagues distant, was a visitor to the family, which consisted of mine host and hostess, two or three fine Gaucho boys, a couple of buxom girls, and two black female slaves. There was here also a sort of Gaucho dandy, or Exquisite, who seemed a favourite of the household, and disputed the ground even with the priest himself. This pretty

fellow possessed a kind of wit and small talk which was extremely amusing. He seemed to excel in this respect his Bond-street long spurred brethren of our metropolis, among whose failings wit cannot be numbered. He was dressed in the pink of the mode in his own part of the world; he wore a handsome white figured *Poncho*, something in appearance like a fine Indian shawl. Beneath it hung the lower extremities of a pair of white trowsers, with open lace work round the bottoms, in the way of trimming; a falling fringe, about two inches deep, fancifully knotted to answer that which depended from the poncho, encircled his ancles. His sandals, formed of colt's skin, prepared as we have mentioned before, and delicately white, enclosed the smallest foot I ever beheld belonging to a man of six feet high. On his heels were affixed a pair of ponderous richly chased silver Peruvian spurs, which must have weighed a pound each. A scarlet worked scapular hung from his neck; which with

his throat was bare, and supported the handsomest head I ever beheld, while upon its crown, was stuck a hat so small, it would hardly have fitted a child of three years of age. The hat had a brim an inch wide. A ribbon was destined to keep this hat in its place when riding, and to fasten under the chin, but on this shew-off and lounging occasion, it had slipped as it were by accident to the lower lip, giving a knowing turn to the expression of his face. His hair was cut short, excepting near the ears, where it hung in ringlets entangled with a pair of gold earrings. His mode of puffing a cigar to display a tawdry Birmingham ring, could not be surpassed by an unfledged Exquisite, qualifying for the guards, or a St. James's beau of the first water. Yet it must be admitted that his manner was withal very cavalier-like. It was a cause of wonder to me, what such an animal could do here, amid this character of country, but I soon found he was a travelling gambler, who at-

tended at fêtes, to amuse the natives, and ease them of any spare dollars they had laid by for horse-racing and cock-fighting, of which no devotees to Tattersal's betting room can be more fond, than the inhabitants of these remote regions. In short the Gaucho was a sort of travelling Crockford's; an ambulatory gaming club in himself, for the general accommodation.

As we saw some of the party move away from the house, we were under apprehension we should not find accommodations for the night; and were beginning to prepare for a "field bed," when they gave us to understand that they were getting ready the recess of the saloon for us. I declined putting the good folks to this trouble, and hinted the inconvenience and impropriety of our taking precedence of the holy father more especially. This seemed to please him, for I heard him say, "these heretics are very amiable people."

In the morning I arose on seeing a ray of

light breaking through the gable end of the apartment, with the view of rousing our peons, and getting ready for pursuing our journey. While groping my way towards the only outlet from the room, my foot became entangled in the fringe of the Exquisite's poncho; and in getting clear of him, I fell plump upon the calapash of the fat curé—

Incidit in Scyllem qui vult vitare Charybdim.

The startled priest gave out an *Ave Maria*, accompanied with a jerk that trundled me over upon his neighbour, the negress-cook of the family. "Madre de Dios!" exclaimed the huge she-African. Every thing here, thought I, is upon the same grand scale! Away I hobbled, right gladly, into the open fresh air of the morning, leaving the padre and dandy, father, mother, sisters, brothers, and a couple of negresses to snore it away in the same room.

The *mal-à-propos* incident just alluded to

caused the whole family to be upon their legs at an earlier hour than usual. The Gaucho dandy was first upon the alert, paying his respects to the peons' fire-side, around which we were taking our morning coffee. After the compliments of the morning, "Good day, gentlemen!" and puffing volumes of smoke from his dusky nostrils, he partook of some breakfast, which seemed very agreeable to his stomach, and no doubt occasioned us the honour of his company. During the repast he apologized for the unintentional share he had in the recent rencontre. He then amused us with a humorous description of the manner of crossing the Saladillo, which he represented as very dangerous and turbulent; and in testimony of the interest he felt for his "new friends," tendered us his services to aid us in its passage. On our vehicle coming up, he pressed me much to take a gallop upon his fine prancing steed, caparisoned very much in his own style, but

which I declined, paid my "adieus" to my host, the Señoras, the sleek priest, apologized to the fat negress cook for my intrusion on her slumbers, and drove away at a canter.

This morning, the 28th of June, was fine and rather more than bracing; it was even cold, considering how mild this region is. The scenery was woody and luxuriant; the surface undulating, but quite destitute of that interest in respect of population which can confer attraction even upon a sterile country. Our attention, however, was kept alive by the dextrous equestrian exploits of our dandy companion, who seemed to possess much real humour. On our approaching the Saladillo, he sounded a conch as a signal to the amphibious bipeds who inhabit there, and then put his horse at full speed, as though he intended to encounter the stream *à la Poniatowsky;* but in a moment, on the very edge of the bank, he stopped his horse with such a curb back on the haunches as seemed

enough to break the creature's neck and his own too. He then sprung off, released the animal in the twinkling of an eye from the manifold trappings of the saddle; and flinging the rein over his head, led him to the extreme verge where the bank was five or six feet high above the water. The sagacious animal first looked at the torrent below, as if he was disposed to differ with his master in opinion as to the necessity of his taking such a useless leap, when there was a regular slope a little further on. The dandy, however, was bent on shewing his horse's good breeding and spirit. Dealing him a crack or two with his whip, the noble creature sprang like Quintus Curtius into the gulph, with desperate power. He soon emerged, snorting above the waves, seeming to say, "though not in my element, I obey my master." He quickly reached the opposite side of the river, neighing, as if to announce his arrival, and remained per-

fectly stationary with the reins between his legs, until his master had crossed.*

Our own horses did not exhibit quite so much metal. Being released, they joined our spare relay and took the river at an easier part, as a matter to which they had been long accustomed. This interesting display of animal sagacity, a proof of the skill of the South Americans in equestrian education, was destined speedily to give way to another scene of a still more unique character. At once from the opposite bank we saw not horses, but, gentle reader, be not shocked, women *in puris naturalibus*, plunge into the stream and tow with a hide line in their mouths the flotilla which was to navigate us across. These women were followed by a score or more of the lords of the creation in the same primitive state, bringing across a catamaran of casks to

* The horses are trained to stand with the bridle so cast, from which position they will not stir till released.

buoy up the carriage on its passage. I had, it is true, listened before to the dandy Gaucho's description of this rare exhibition with some incredulity; but my doubts were now removed. It was highly picturesque to see them like water nymphs plunge into their native element, and then emerge, with their white teeth chattering from the cold, and wringing their raven glossy tresses, as they ran up the bank towards us, to contest for the preference of their services, and hold a palaver for our rials.

Southern America, at least this part of it, is not the garden of Eden, nor the abode of Peris or Houris. But if Eve's daughters vary here in complexion, some of them certainly illustrate the innocence of our first parents before the fall: "They were naked and were not ashamed." It could not be said that "grace was in all their steps," nor "heaven in their eyes," the pure heaven of intelligence; nor "dignity and love" in their every "gesture," such as Milton

conferred on our universal mother. But they were adorned with some natural charms notwithstanding, which the imagination of Moore has delighted to dwell upon in depicting their race. In place of the lilly and rose, the marigold bloomed on their cheeks; their eyes shot their radiance, not from bright sapphire orbs, but from those of black crystal, from eyes "black as death," as Byron describes it. Their smiles were no disguises of art, but possessed the recommendation of a simplicity fully as bewitching. Their lips were of deep coral colour; no European teeth were ever so white; while the climate seemed to have conferred upon their amber limbs, the enduring flexibility of the Indian cane, rather than the lithe feebleness of the European ozier.

The Balsa or hide boat is formed of a bullock's skin squared, and brought together with a single fastening at the corners. It looks at a distance like a bohea tea-chest floating down the

stream. A couple of trunks being first put into this cockle boat by way of ballast, I soon saw by its elastic motion that there was an absolute necessity for preserving a nice balance while crossing. To this I observed my pilotess was particularly attentive; she fixed me in the centre of the hide at the exact place of gravity, with a care not at all requisite to an old seaman. Here then I took my seat, having previously prepared for a swim. The line of the "balsa" was now taken between the teeth of the swimmer, and she buffeted the stream with a spirit that made the current sparkle. Occasionally she turned her head with an expression of encouragement upon me, as much as to say 'don't be frightened.' I could not, however, help reflecting upon my singular situation, as I crossed; only the thickness of a hide between me and eternity, and indebted solely to the address of a woman in swimming, for my safety!

The ferrying over the carriage was a duty

which devolved wholly upon the men, who impelled it across upon casks with as much facility as the women had conducted the "balsas." It was four hours before we got every thing securely over, after which we warmed our shivering water-nymphs internally with a little aguardiente before a blazing fire.

We now pursued our journey through a trackless forest. Our postillions seemed to find their way by a kind of instinct, and we made but sixteen leagues all day, stopping at night at Tarica Pampa, a post-house so called. The spot round this halting place was cleared out from the very heart of the jungle. It was a beautiful evening, though pitchy dark, and we preferred to bivouac it, our camp being the open air, in preference to encountering the vermin in doors. We were thus enjoying ourselves *à la Gaucho*, when one of our party observed that the moon was rising rather early. Our position, however, in respect to her rising,

did not agree with the light which we saw. We then conjectured it must be a light proceeding from some distant cottage; for by reference to our watches, we moreover found that it wanted three hours of the time when the moon should be visible. Nevertheless, in figure and brightness, this appearance perfectly resembled her orb as seen in the first quarter. In a few minutes the appearance vanished, and many and diverse were the opinions as to its cause. The post-master asserted it could not be a cottage light, there was none in that direction. It was then suggested it might be the blaze of some muleteen's fire, who was reposing for the night. The subject, conjectures and all, were soon dropped, and the plan for our next morning's movements discussed, when the light re-appeared, but somewhat altered in figure and direction.

The cause of the phenomenon was again renewed, and the post-master again consulted,

From him we could get nothing but a declaration of his ignorance, adding he had often heard his post-boys talk of such an appearance, and ascribe it to the wandering spirit of a traveller, who had been murdered by Salteadores, or robbers, a few years ago. It was now proposed that we should go and explore the quarter where this luminous object shewed itself, when it suddenly changed its form from that of a crescent into a splendid cross-like shape, by a quick lateral movement, with the rapidity of a meteor or shooting star. We were now more than ever at a loss. Upon examining the capitaz, or bailiff of the Estancia, he insisted upon its being a wandering spirit, "nothing more," "*nada mas Señor!*" The innocent way in which he brought this out, and the coolness with which he pronounced these words, were highly characteristic of the courage and superstition of the Gaucho character. The arrival of the Buenos Ayres postman for Salta, who came to light his

cigar at our fire, induced us to question him, in the hope to obtain a solution of our difficulty, He informed us that the object of our wonder was nothing but a "paca blanca," or white bird, which appeared very often in the woods, both of this and the neighbouring provinces of Santiago del Estero and Tucuman. He furthermore added, that in the course of his numerous journies, he had often seen and disturbed it. A peon, a friend of his, he told us, who had chanced to "lasso," or snare one, had accounted for its lucid quality at night from its having a luminous crest or stone on the crown of its head, which reflected its phosphoric light on the white plumage below.

It is very difficult to attach belief to all one hears under such circumstances among superstitious people; but there seemed to me something more of credit due to this statement than I was at first willing to concede. On examining it for the sake of argument, there was some-

thing consistent with the story in the two forms under which we saw the light, supposing the bird was in such a position that the light from its head was thrown on its back and tail, which might take the first form seen, while the motion of flying would throw the light of the crest upon the wings, and exhibit a cross if the bird flew in an oblique manner, either to avoid the branches of the trees, as it passed from one to another, or even if it flew towards or from us. This explanation was the only reasonable one we could come to on the subject. At all events, the chiasqui, or post-man, satisfied us we were all wrong in our previous modes of accounting for the phenomenon.

During the night we were disturbed by the noise of innumerable animals, denominated in the country Biscacho. They had undermined the spot on which we slept, burrowing like rabbits, which they resemble in colour. Like rabbits too, they squat sentry fashion at

the entrances to their subterraneous tenements. The head of the biscacho is not pointed like that of the rabbit, but ends bluntly, having a rounded mouth and short ears, and armed with a couple of tusky teeth, projecting from a slit upper lip. They are very shy, and their sole associate is the owl. On riding by them at night, squatting in groupes, they resemble so many pigmy grey friars in sober conclave. It is most probably a species of Cavy. With some difficulty, after many trials in vain, by stealing behind trees and banks, I succeeded in killing one of these animals, which in size and weight was at least equivalent to a couple of our largest rabbits. The flesh was delicious eating, and would be highly esteemed in England, though here they turned up their noses at them disdainfully.

Our journey on the 29th lay through a country so thickly wooded, that the branches of the trees scraped the sides of our carriage

and smashed in the windows, which was not very agreeable. At other times we were put to a loss by our post-boys missing the track. All these petty inconveniences were afterwards amply repaid on our arrival at Carmela Atchabal, a post-house with accommodations to which we had long been strangers. An excellent dinner was provided for us in a very short time, and we had the luxury of a night's rest in comfortable apartments. Our chief enjoyment, however, was in getting again into comparatively civilized society. There is nothing more agreeably striking to an Englishman, than the sudden transition from barbarous society into that which may be esteemed comparatively of condition, particularly in such a sequestered place as that which we were now arrived at, having nothing corresponding with its comforts and manners.

In the spot where we had thus taken up our quarters, after the day's fatigue, sojourned, in

insulated obscurity, a fair individual, who might have glittered with no borrowed light in a palace. The scene reminded us of those chivalrous and Quixotic days and objects when gallant Spanish knights were wont to contest the charms of a dulcinea, and prove a title to her notice by breaking a lance in her behalf. The lady of Atchabal would have been a fine heroine of a good old Spanish romance, and praiseworthy would it be to hazard a lance for the applause of her bright eyes. I have before observed that the Spanish American dames possess qualities which they seem to gain from the fine climate they inhabit. When contemplating them, we think it happy for mankind that to those charms, for which they are indebted to nature, they have not superadded the attractions derived from education and art. In person and form, this lady appeared to my fancy a strong resemblance to the handsomer portraits which have been left us of Mary Queen

of Scots. I could not help wishing that some artist, who had delineated with masterly hand that unfortunate queen's portrait as I have seen it, (be it a resemblance of the unfortunate Mary or not,) with Rizzio seated at her music, could have drawn the lady before us playing on her guitar. I cannot put into language the natural and simple elegance and beauty of this female; all her charms were derived from nature, and tended to prove how little art is capable of substituting a carriage or demeanour, worthy to be placed by the side of one of her favourites. There are indeed graces beyond the reach of art, even in the wilds and deserts of the New World.

On the 30th we must have crossed the boundary line of the two provinces of Cordova and Santiago del Estero; but so ignorant were the people we met with of the geography of their own country, that I could not ascertain the line by the most diligent inquiry. Our charming

Señora of Atchabal had said her Estancia was situated in Santiago del Estero, rating its distance about forty leagues from that city. We commenced our journey through a forest almost impenetrably thick. It had a road barely broad enough for a carriage to pass, with much inconvenience from the overhanging branches. Our first stage was five leagues, to a hamlet consisting only of a few miserable huts. Among these a scene presented itself which is I trust without parallel on the globe. I allude to the effects of a disease, of which I have before spoken, and which is here the offspring of hereditary constitution, or simple contact, as well as of vice. No remedy is known as I have before observed, but the Algarroba berry. The son of the post-master requested me to go into the house, and see his unfortunate father and mother. I did as he requested, and found the man in a situation, in which for two years he had remained, consuming by inches, presenting

a most horrible spectacle. The woman was seated on the ground upon her hams by the fire, at so little distance, that I thought her toes must be burned. Both her eyes were gone, her face was noseless, and she pathetically implored relief for her sufferings. What a painful feeling came over me to find it out of my power to afford even a palliative, and to behold the frightful ravages of this cruel disease. I inquired if no medical assistance was at hand. They told me that there was no medical man to whom they could apply nearer than Cordova. There was, indeed, a practitioner at Santiago del Estero, or a person who affected to be such, but that place was a hundred miles distant. What he gave them was not of the least service, but rather the opposite. The medicine they obtained from Cordova proved to be a nostrum of a Frenchman, named Roy, which, taken in an improper quantity, was certain death (perhaps corrosive sublimate). This we knew had been the effect

of it at Cordova, on a clerk to the administrator of the customs, whom we saw passing to his office in the morning, and at two P.M. he was dead.

The people of South America have an unconquerable aversion to mercury as a medicine in any form. Perhaps they have imbibed a prejudice against it from dear bought experience of the ignorance of practitioners in administering doses, which though moderate to an Englishman's constitution, would be almost death to a South American, so much do their temperaments differ from ours. It is probable that a judicious assimilation of quantity to the constitution of the climate has never been properly attended to.

This day we made fifteen leagues, and in the evening slept in the open air, which we now prefer doing, as the most independent and comfortable mode of passing the night. It was our first essay at camping out with a view to the uniform practice in future, and we found

it agree best with our feelings. So we resolved to carry a store of provisions, and consign ourselves to the charity of mother nature for our apartments. By this means we escaped being witnesses of the misery of the scanty population, and their incurable complaints, to which our presence could afford no alleviation.

On the first of July we arose, fresh as the breath of the morning around us, and merry as larks. Our sleep had been undisturbed and strengthening to our bodies, and no benchucas had left their intolerable marks upon our limbs. A most delicious odour had been wafted to us during the night, and whilst the horses were getting ready, I endeavoured to find out what tree or shrub had impregnated the air with so Arabian a scent; but whether it came from unknown plants or trees in the wood around, or whence it came at all, I was not fortunate enough to determine. The province of Santiago del Estero, is full of valuable productions of every kind;

many only concealed, some undiscovered, others known and neglected. There the Cactus yields its valuable deposits. The plant on which the cochineal insect weaves its carmine web, is called by the natives *opuntia*, and grows a wild underling in the woods, checked by impending foliage. In cleared ground around the villages, where a few cultivators take the trouble to attend to it, this plant rises to perfection, and yields a rich harvest to the owners. I was very sorry that the season was over, or I might else have seen the interesting cochineal spider at its labours.

As for several days preceding, the dense wood through which we travelled, with only a small break here and there, prevented my making the most trivial observation on the face of the country not immediately close to me. All I can say, therefore, of our twenty leagues of journey this day, grounded on appearances closely bordering upon our route, is, that I wanted nothing

further to convince me, that an association properly conducted, would find in this province a fund of indigenous wealth, superior to any mining adventure in permanent profit, and of certain and easy attainment.

At sunset we arrived at the city of Santiago, as it was once denominated, and took up our abode for the night in a miserable room, in a Bodegon, or pot-house, there being no such thing as an inn in the whole place.

CHAPTER V.

Reception at Santiago—Ball—Ramble through the City—Decay of buildings and business—Governor—Adulteration of coinage—Governor and Frenchman—Revenue—Great hospitality—Manners at table—Santiago river—Vinará—Tucumanese schoolmaster—Tucuman—An English resident—Sitting in the sala or senate—Character of debates—Conclusion of a contract for mines—Reflections.

We were now in the city of Santiago del Estero, having travelled one hundred and fifteen leagues from Cordova. The 2nd of July had dawned, when having shaved and arranged my toilette, I went and paid my respects to the governor as a matter of form. I had received a letter of introduction to a family in the place. The head of the house was unfortunately absent, but his lady not only gave me an

invitation to dine, but despatched a breakfast by her servants to my lodgings. It consisted of excellent milk, fresh eggs, new bread, and a capital stew after the fashion of the country, called an "olla." We declined the hospitable invitation to dine, with a view of proceeding further on the following morning, and of making the necessary preparations in the interim. We found, however, that our carriage wanted some arrangements which would occupy time, and we therefore accepted an invitation to a "bayla del pais" in the evening, having nothing better to do. A country ball here is an amusement bearing little resemblance to the Tertullias of Cordova and Buenos Ayres, where the dancing is for the most part, confined to the graceful Spanish country dance and minuet, which is exceedingly grave and dignified. I had, it is true, seen before occasional specimens of the Mariquita and other Gaucho dances, but never in the pure style exhibited here. The airs are

played on the guitar, and that of the Mariquita is peculiarly expressive of the amatory breathings and incipient advances of lovers to each other, which this dance caricatures. The close of the set is that which excites most merriment, for then the squeamish and coy fair one, who has kept aloof and hitherto waved her handkerchief as her flag of triumph and independence, now strikes it and yields herself up to the irresistible and overwhelming advances of her amorous swain. These dances cannot be styled the most decorous in the world, and, in truth, are not far removed from those of a people far less civilized, from the African and other exhibitions of the same species which I have witnessed in a very different part of the world. Their having been encouraged and countenanced here under the old Spaniards and their priests, is only another instance of the immoral feelings and propensities of the monks and friars that inundated this country from Europe, and than whom

a viler herd never devoured a subjected country. These men left the savage far more base and depraved than nature had made him, and even added to his character the refinement of European profligacy without one of its counterbalancing restraints. All that could pander their own sensual appetites in the aboriginal manners they suffered the natives to retain, and where the glimmering light of nature had infused a consciousness of right and wrong—a conduct open and candid, they laboured to obliterate every trace of the manly virtues by enveloping the mind in the net of hideous superstition. It is impossible to reflect without horror on the cold, calculating vices of the Spanish clergy in the new world. Had hell let loose her worst fiends upon society, they could not have proceeded more deliberately to eradicate from the human soul every relic of that kindly and virtuous feeling, of which the most untutored have some share by nature. The conduct of the Spaniards

in America from the beginning was a tissue of vice and cruelty, the details of which would be incredible were there not too many damning evidences of the truth left to blot the name of their country with infamy. Let those who wish to be masters of the subject, read the "Noticias Secretas," &c. of Ulloa, and see if language has epithets of disgrace too strong for these demons. I observed much and heard more respecting manners with which my pen must not stain the paper—manners which they formed.

Finding we should be delayed another day from the want of post-horses for proceeding on our journey to Tucuman our present destination, I took an early ramble through this neglected city, and its environs. It now contains scarcely a relic of its former wealth and consideration. The cathedral is a fine building, though in a very dilapidated state; some of the houses in the streets are fitted up in front with costly

cedar, or mahogany pillars richly carved. All speaks the once flourishing state of the place; but now the stranger looks in vain after those ample resources, and that wealth and trade, which could support the charges of a diocesan clergy, and so extended a religious establishment, as must have been fixed here.

It is impossible to contemplate without a melancholy regret, the overthrow and ruin of long settled institutions under any circumstances. Such sights are humiliating to the human mind, as evidences of the decay and instability of its proudest works. The incalculable ignorance and apathy of the present population, however, whispers that the display of a religion, which existed only to enslave the mind by superstition, and dazzle it with pomp—that was but a state tax for the degradation of the people, instead of the means of virtuous instruction—a mere temporal object to its professors, who grasped at wealth to satisfy corrupt and sensual cravings, must

have had an end at last. Rotten systems, whether religious or political, must fall to pieces, that better may grow out of their decay. The gross ignorance of the people of Santiago is a cause of much of their present deplorable state. Had the teachers of religion done their duty, and enlarged and opened the minds of the people, they would, instead of apathy and idleness becoming their portion, have suffered comparatively little by the shock of their revolution. Resuscitated and vigorous, they would have found that shock only a fresh impulse to attain a more flourishing condition than before. A revolution in a nation, in which the knowledge of the people is far in advance of its institutions, will infallibly produce benefit, when the anarchy of the moment is past. Among a people differently circumstanced, long and weary is the path to prosperity.

In Santiago, the wreck of its former population is in a state of inconceivable stupor. All they can tell an Englishman is, that they are "*muy*

pobre," (very poor,) and instead of putting their own shoulders to the wheel, and by vigorous exertions, aided by the resources of a rich country and favourable soil, restoring themselves, they say they rely for succour upon the only nation but old Spain, of which they know any thing, and from the only people whom they were bred up by their late tyrants to loathe and abhor, "Los Ingleses." To him, indeed, I mean to an Englishman, the wood, the wool, the woollens, the dyes, gums, wines, borax, and the river of Santiago, hint of a lucrative trade in some future time, and of a fine scene for immediate speculation.

The present governor of Santiago, Senior Ybarro, is the sole ruler there by the *ultima ratio*. He is one of those daring spirits, whom revolutionary times call into action, for purposes to which men of lesser force of mind would be inadequate. In the present instance, however, the faculties of the ruler's mind have been

directed to increase the calamities of the time. If the general account given respecting him be correct, the desolation caused by the governor, is corroborated by that which the eye meets on every turn in the city. The people may well wish their old masters back again, for their tyranny might be endured from long habit, and the comparatively easy yoke it inflicted.

A recent occurrence, worth relating, added deeply to the distress of the afflicted people of Santiago. It contributed to their calamities at a moment when suffering was most difficult to be borne, and when they themselves fancied that the storms which they had so long been able to resist were blown over. The extreme poverty of the local government induced it to issue a currency, with twenty or thirty per cent. of alloy, stamped after the old rial, and purporting to be of full value. The executive branch of the government gave this proceeding sanction, and most probably profited by the transaction.

The inconvenience was soon felt by the public, and a decree, as a matter of course, was immediately issued, for putting a stop to the proceeding. This measure had already inflicted great injury on individuals; when it happened that an ingenious Frenchman, a Napoleonist, who was reported to have participated in the profits of the transaction, was charged with privately issuing a second coinage of the base money; whether unjustly charged or not, I could not decide from any information to which I had access. The charge however was the means of bringing him into a dispute with the governor, and was productive of so much animosity and ill will between them, that the governor at last had the unlucky Frenchman seized, and for some casual epithet the latter had applied to his dignity, ordered him to be punished with a hundred lashes on the posterior part of the body. The poor Frenchman, indignant at the injustice he had sustained, naturally enough

felt a determination to revenge himself (for governors in South America must not expect, any more than in other places, to practice injustice with impunity), at the first convenient time and place. The governor was accompanied by his orderly man, wherever he went, and some months elapsed before an opportunity occurred to the Frenchman for vengeance. At length he obtained information of the exact situation and spot where his tyrant slept, which happened, at that season, to be in a verandah outside his house. Armed with pistols, he proceeded in the dead of the night to his revenge. On his arrival he found the sentinel on guard asleep, and no impediment offering itself, he stole to the side of the bed or cot where his foe slept. In that fine climate no covering is necessary at night. He took sure aim at his enemy's heart, and fired. So true was the direction that his victim died without a groan. Before the report of the pistol could lead any one in pur-

suit, with the fleetness of an arrow he fled, and mounting a swift horse, already saddled, got clear off to Tucuman. What must have been his feelings, on finding afterwards that he had killed the ill-fated secretary, and not the master! That night, from some chance cause, the secretary had changed situations with the governor, and the latter thus escaped his doom. Tucuman was then in a state of hostility with Santiago, and the governor of that province received the Frenchman with open arms. Instead of giving him up, he employed him in a military capacity against his former enemy, and sent him to make an attack on Santiago itself. This attack failed. Peace was soon after made between the two provinces, or rather the governors; the Frenchman was treacherously given up, in the way the Emperor of Austria sacrificed Hofer to the French, and executed, without a trial, in the usual summary manner. He met his fate with the *sang froid* and intrepidity peculiar to his

gallant countrymen under similar circumstances. He said he was happy to die as an atonement for the innocent blood he had shed; but with his latest breath, he execrated the author of his untimely death.

At Santiago del Estero, as at most of the other towns and cities of South America which I visited, I could get no statement of the population. From appearances I should judge it not half so populous as Cordova. The principal traffic at present seems to be in ponchos, pillions, and woollen fabrics for men and women's dresses. The saddle-cloths which they manufacture, are extremely handsome, and the price moderate. They also make wooden ware of all kinds. Bowls, dishes, and other useful articles are turned from the hard wood of the country, which is very durable and cheap. The little revenue of the government seems principally derived from transit duties upon merchandize, to the upper Provinces of Peru. These are

levied in a very arbitary manner, reflecting no little disgrace on the administration. There is also a heavy toll collected from a rudely constructed bridge, over the river; for our carriage and two or three loaded mules, we paid twelve dollars, which the bridge itself is scarcely worth. What deficiency there may be in the revenue, afterwards, is supplied by a general contribution, which is therefore, at all times, very unequal. The state of society cannot but be affected by all these disadvantages, and the character of the governor is as I have said but indifferent; yet I found the same kind feeling manifested here, towards strangers as elsewhere; every house was open to the English, and what little they had to offer, was freely and heartily given. We dined with the family, which I have before mentioned, the day after our arrival, and received a kindness and attention almost distressing to us. We were not only cloyed to suffocation, by the quantity we were forced to take, but

reduced to the predicament, awkward enough to an Englishman, of exchanging love titbits from each other's forks. The wine glass was interchanged, so as that it might be sipped from the exact spot where the fragrant, or flagrant lips, (as they might happen to be) of the Señorita, who offered the token of regard, had deposited their vapour. At this latter ceremony, the eyes have a considerable task to perform. They must be fixed upon the object they may not care to gaze upon, as tenderly as possible. I never felt so ridiculous, and I had almost said abashed, in my life, as on these occasions. I wished the dinner at the devil a hundred times before it was half concluded. Besides this, there is the additional misery attached to their turtle-dove system of drinking, that you are perpetually thinking you will soon be done up, upon the sweet unclarified wine of the Rioja, and that a terrible headache, like the sword of Damocles, is hanging over you, as a consequence the next

morning. I would not for the world by these remarks be thought to undervalue or feel ungrateful for the unlimited kindness shewn me according to the customs of the country. I only state my own sensations as a stranger, and exhibit details of national manners with which I came into contact, as well as their effects upon individual feeling. The hospitality and open good-nature of these people can never be forgotten by me, or cease to be a theme of gratitude and panegyric.

In the garden of the lady who so hospitably entertained me, I gathered some specimens of the cotton plant, with the webs forming the dormitory of a large species of silk-worm. After coffee, and a second exhibition of the gaiety of the preceding night in the way of dancing, I parted from the lady who had been thus polite to me, and returned to my barn of a lodging to get ready for the next morning's journey.

On the 4th of July in the morning, we found

that the capitaz had been making merry with his fellows, and the sun was nearly at the meridian before we set out. Our excellent friends discovering this to be the case, pressed us very hard to spend the remnant of the day with them. It would have been very inconvenient for us to do this, and while they still pressed us, our carriage drove up and settled the question. We parted, not without regret on our side, and demonstrations of sorrow on that of these warm-hearted persons, as though we had been acquainted for years, or were even relatives of each other. Such are the warm feelings of the inhabitants of the finer climates of the globe—quick in anger, strong in the passions, and warm in affection and friendship. This shows itself in their social amusements, and appears in their table ceremonies just mentioned, which so annoyed me.

The cold in clime are cold in blood—

but in these climates, the passions, the virtues,

and the vices, of humanity, are "like the lava flood."

We proceeded on our way with tolerable rapidity, considering that our road was over a bed of silt, fetlock deep, in the midst of a jungle, and continued in this bad state until we approached the river of Santiago. The conch was now again blown to announce our arrival, as our dandy Gaucho had blown it at the Saladillo passage. The people on the opposite side were not quite so much on the alert as the dark nymphs of Saladillo. We therefore sat down, enjoying ourselves on the smooth margin of the river, the appearance and windings of which reminded me of the Thames at Twickenham, when seen from the Park side. The balsa apparatus for our passage was brought over in simple hides, by naked men on horseback, sometimes swimming. As there was no float brought for our vehicle, we expected it would be carried

away, the river being equally as rapid and still wider than the Saladillo.

The hides were united at the corners in an instant, and we were towed over in the same manner as before, with the difference of having hardy Indians to ferry us, instead of water nymphs. Our carriage followed, floating with great difficulty. It cost us almost as much time to pass the Santiago, as it did Napoleon to transport himself over the Danube with his army.

It was nearly dark when we arrived with our baggage safe on the opposite bank of the Santiago river. What were we to do for the night, at the mercy of the Indians, who might direct us as they thought proper? Should we remain on the river's bank all night? It is interesting, even in these regions, so remote from the tracks of Europeans, to encounter a few viscissitudes. Days and weeks we had passed, from morn to eve, often with the like sameness and monotony of

adventure—something to rouse, therefore, added to variety. We made up our minds to trust ourselves for the night among this singular race, the aborigines of South America. They conducted us for three fourths of an hour, threading the mazes of a deep wood, without one glimmer of light to guide our course. My old nursery stories were beginning to recur to memory—the distant cottage light, which at last appears through the forest, the abode of banditti—robbery—murder, and I know not what. These might have been found in Europe; but in the bosom of the vast continent of America, the scene turned out very differently. At Santiago itself, we were not entertained with greater kindness than by these poor Indians. We had excellent fare. Roast kid or lamb; a fowl stewed, much resembling the malagatawni of the Malays, a plenty of new laid eggs, and good bread, at the threshold of a roaring fire, and surrounded by a bronze faced tribe of men,

women, and children, gazing on us, and cracking their jokes. It was a scene much more than entertaining—it was novel and interesting. It was one of untutored pleasant hospitality. We were not cloyed to suffocation by the polite kindness of our hosts, nor was I abashed at exchanging love titbits or complimentary glasses of wine.

The following day, July the 5th, we pursued our journey, intending to breakfast at a village very pleasantly situated, called Vinará, six leagues from the river of Santiago, and remarkable for the appearance of industry which it presented. No one here seemed to live in idleness; the women, even while gazing at our carriage, were spinning away at the same time. I observed too, that here the cochineal plant spread a broader leaf, and flourished with greater luxuriance in the gardens and hedgerows of the cottages around, than at any place I had before visited. Industry is the first step

to improvement, and education follows hard upon it,' thought I, as on foot, attracted by a busy hum of voices, we made our way through an intervening copse towards the spot whence it seemed to come. A fig-tree, the superincumbent branches of which shaded a wide circuit of ground, arrested our progress; and looking through an opening among the large green leaves, we espied the village pedagogue, elevated on his authoritative seat, which was attached to the trunk of the tree. He was reading a lecture on the heads of his scholars—a phrenological dissertation, if one might judge from its effects, with a wand long enough to bump the *caput* of the most remote offender. I was much struck with the sight. I began to think myself in some European district, certainly not from the late samples I had seen of the country, in the heart of the Columbian continent. There, however, I was in reality, and in the fine province of Tucuman, with nearly half

the globe's surface between Europe and myself. The picture was a very striking one occurring with these reflections. The beautiful vegetable roofed school-room too, struck my fancy. What a delightful natural study!—the cool broad leaves overarching it, and heightening the interest of the scene. The striplings were seated, without regular order, on the grass, under a rotunda of this magnificent foliage. Some were cross-legged bawling Ba, Be, Bi; others, with their knees for a table, seemed engraving rather than writing, upon a wooden tablet, the size of a common slate. One or two, who appeared to be more advanced in their studies, were furnished with a copy-book, an expensive article in that place. Some were busy at arithmetic, while, every moment, whack went the rod upon the crown of the idler or yawner.

To us the sight was curious; we had seen none lately but what were the reverse of carefully educated beings. But we had little time to

think, for a laugh burst forth at their perceiving us, which naturally attracted the notice of the pedagogue, who took up his crutch to go and examine the cause, for he was a cripple. We immediately came forward to the only opening among the rich verdure, and meeting him announced ourselves as the intruders. He was as much surprised as his pupils had been. His magisterial brow, for he was alcalde as well as schoolmaster, relaxed into a civil smile. He invited us to walk in, and we accepted his invitation, and entertained ourselves with examining the progress made by his boys in their studies, and in replies to his numerous questions put respecting the battle of Ayacucho, the death of Olañeta, and the termination of the war in Peru. He asked if it was true, that the English were coming to settle in the country, with many similar questions. In answer to our inquiries about himself, he said he was born on the spot, lame as he was, and had never quitted it; he had

given his mind to study, but his profession was (as it is every where else,) "muy pobre;" that the price of a school education there, was from two to four rials a month, according to what the pupil was taught. Just at that moment a boy came up with a pen to be mended. To my surprise, he drew from his old pair of Spanish blues (open at the knees, with a silver buckle appended), what we denominate a Flemish or gardener's knife, and proceeded, with the help of a pair of cracked spectacles, to nib the pen.

"What," said I, "Viejo, (old boy) have you no better instrument than that to work with?"

"Nada mas Señor, yo soy muy pobre Señor." (Nothing more, Sir, I am very poor.)

"Well," I replied, "I think I can help you to something better than that for the convenience of your calling," and I gave him an old four-bladed English knife, which I happened to have in my pocket at the time. On looking at it, he exclaimed in astonishment, "Que quatro enchillas in una!" (what, four blades in one

knife!) He had never beheld such a machine in his life. I told him it was of English manufacture. "Caramba," he replied, "los Ingleses son hombres muy habiles!" (the English are very clever). I told him it was at his service. "Por quanto?" (for how much) he asked, with a look significant of his inability to purchase it. "Por nada," (for nothing) I answered. He immediately crossed himself, exclaiming, "Gracias á Dios," (thank God). He could not have shown more satisfaction had it been a ton of gold or a lottery ticket of twenty thousand sterling. His urchins crowded around him to see his treasure, and to get a holiday from him on the strength of his satisfaction, which we made him half promise, and left him.

In examining the cochineal plant, which has a hard, succulent, pulpy leaf, with rows of small tubercles running across the otherwise plain surface, I passed my hand backwards and forwards over it, as one might over velvet,

without observing that each tubercle presented finely pointed spines, which broke off and remained in the white cotton glove I had on my hand. I did not notice the circumstance until, mounting the carriage, I found they had entered my fingers, and it cost me some time to disengage them from these vegetable lances, the points of which, broken off in my hands, reminded me for days afterwards of their intrusion, when I washed them, or pressed any thing very closely.

We travelled from this pleasant village fifteen leagues very rapidly, over a perfect level of fine rich country, and had got within five of the Tucuman when we found one of the cast iron cylinders of our axletree broken to pieces.*

* These cast iron implements have brought our hardware manufacturers into great disgrace in South America. Knives, hatchets, carpenter's tools, nails, &c. &c. having been paid for by the natives at the price of the wrought article. We must not complain of the chicanery of the South Americans, however some individuals have suffered therefrom, and regret their conduct.

This caused us a few hours' delay until we could get horses to ride the remainder of the distance. We reached the city, which is forty leagues from Santiago del Estero, rather late, and found, as at Santiago, that there was no accommodation for unconsigned strangers; we were, therefore, compelled to do the best we could in a "zaquizami," or lumber-room, at the post-house, where we were obliged to pass the night.

In the morning, an Englishman, named Davies, a native of Plymouth, who had been a marine on board Sir Home Popham's vessel, and one of those before spoken of as having been made prisoners on the invasion of Buenos Ayres by the British, came to us, and offered his services to procure lodgings. He told us that the expectation of our arrival had put the people almost out of their senses with joy at the benefits they believed were in store for them. That the governor and cabildo had refused to

grant a monopoly to the commissioner of Buenos Ayres, Colonel Dorego, who had been some time in the city, endeavouring to effect it. After breakfast, which was sent us by a family in the neighbourhood, we paid our respects to the governor, Colonel Lopez, who appointed the next day for a conference relative to a proposition for working the rich mines in the neighbourhood, of which I received previous notice from Mr. Woodbine Parish, the consul-general. We then returned to the post-house, and shifted our quarters. We next received the felicitations of some of the principal inhabitants on our arrival; among the number were some of the members of the government and cabildo, with the heads of the first families in the city.

My arrival at Tucuman, with the avowed object of following up mining pursuits, interfered much with the interest that had been raised by the commission of Buenos Ayres.

This was followed by the exertion of a powerful party influence to defeat my objects; and it cost, in consequence, nearly a month to arrange a contract, which might just as easily have been completed in a week. In the course of these proceedings I had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with those who were most distinguished in rank and station here, and to satisfy my mind that the Tucumaneses are gifted with very superior natural talents. The discussions which arose in the open chamber respecting articles previously agreed upon between the executive and myself, and left for the ultimate adoption of its members, displayed no little talent for oratory, nor was I more surprised at the eloquence than the decorum which prevailed in the height of arguments, in which passion and interest were not lightly intermingled.

The enemies of the governor opposed the contract entered into by the executive from

personal pique. The supporters of the Buenos Ayres commissioner, were opponents from selfish motives, while many of the ecclesiastics resisted on the common ground of foreign exclusion. All the liberal and independent part were anxious for following the example of Buenos Ayres, and admitting the English to a participation in the same privileges as that government had done by the late commercial treaty.

During these sittings an old Jesuit, said to be the only one left in the country, came to the chamber of representatives, and falling on his knees, beseeched the members most fervently, that if they valued their property, their wives and daughters, or had any respect for their holy religion, they would put a stop to all innovations, and prevent the admission of the English heretics. He added, that under the pretence of mining, they would play the same game in America which they had played in India, and subjugate the whole country. The chamber on the

other hand, in despite of the supporters of the wisdom of their ancestors, and the ecclesiastics, upheld the question on the proper basis and on the sound moral consideration, "that the sooner the English settled among them, the earlier the body politic would be benefitted by their industrious habits and wholesome example." It however became necessary to compromise matters, by withdrawing the more objectionable articles.

The style of debate in the chamber at Tucuman, was not as I observed it at some other places. The members did not deliver their sentiments sitting down. The orator having gained the eye of the president or speaker, advanced in front and addressed himself to the chair, standing much as in our House of Commons, and with an air of independence and frankness, very agreeable to an Englishman's notions of freedom in debate. One of the members, an advocate, was the most able of the opponents of

government. He spoke with a boldness and vehemence, that very strongly reminded me of Fox; but he displayed infinitely more grace of manner and a finer intonation than that great orator. I shall never lose the figure of this wiry gray-headed old man, whose coarse hair seemed to erect itself like bristles, while employed in thundering his denunciations against the executive. The nerve and force of his rapid delivery were finely contrasted with the easy, elegant and persuasive manner of Doctor Molino, who answered him with arguments rather than declamation, and with an ease and self-command not to be exceeded in any European assembly. I observed several other members of very considerable power as speakers, and fit to rank with the first order in any senate. The question before the chamber I have before alluded to, was not disposed of for three weeks, and was treated as of great importance to the nation. Contrary to common usage, the citizens

were summoned to the discussion, and examined as evidence *pro* and *con*. The object of this measure was, that the general opinion on the topic under discussion might be obtained, to form a correct judgment, and thus any future differences with the public or among themselves on the subject be avoided. At length, when the contract was concluded, it might be said to have been signed at the bar of the House of Representatives, by the chief men of the province; and thus to have acquired a character of a more respectable and honorable nature than any other.*

English perseverance, industry and enterprise, find a key to every corner of the globe. The name of England, which the old Spaniards made a term of reproach in these provinces, is now one of respect. The people even in the

* It is worthy of remark, that I was permitted to explain myself, on points urged as objectionable, by the opponents during the debate.

centre of this remote continent are more enlightened and liberal, display more intelligence, and already possess better notions of what will contribute to their country's welfare, than the monarch and counsellors of the old country ; and the day is not far distant when perfectly acquainted with the relative situation of European nations, the Tucumaneses will learn to look with contempt, upon the ignorance and imbecility of the king of the Indies, and his misguided and besotted European empire.

CHAPTER VI.

Province of Tucuman—Products—Habits of the people—Effects of the late Revolution—Ecclesiastical influence and bias—Dialogue of a mother and her daughters—Encouragement given to foreigners—Singular beauty of the province—The Sierras—Mining—Objections to it answered—Defects of late mining companies—Roads of Tucuman—Beautiful scenery and views—Exquisite feelings from the serenity of the climate—Gaucho character—Wild beast hunting—Forest scenery, plants, &c.—

THE province of Tucuman is situated between the twenty-fifth and twenty-eighth parallels of south latitude, and the sixty-third and sixty-sixth meridian west longitude. Its form seems to approach a trapezium of about forty leagues on the sides. Its boundaries are the provinces of Salta, Santiago del Estero, and Catamarca, Salta skirts it from the N. W., to N. E.; San-

tiago del Estero from N. E. to S. E., and Catamarca thence to N. W. A branch of the Cordillera of the Andes, its extreme western limit, rises to a height of nearly thirteen thousand feet above the immeasurable pampas or plains, which stretch to the southward of Buenos Ayres; to Paraguay on the north; westerly to the ridges of the Andes, and on the east comprises the whole extent of Indian territority Entre-Rios, Missiones, Corrientes, Santa Fé, &c.

Of that part of the forgoing plains which are comprehended within the limits of the province of Tucuman, the soil is various. It consists of almost every species, except chalk. Districts of clay, loam, sand and gravel, are frequently fallen in with; but the soil which most prevails, is a fine rich black mould, from one to six feet deep lying upon a sandy substratum. The diversity of these soils gives endless variety to the vegetable productions of the country, and renders them uncommonly abundant. The most cul-

tivated grains and roots are six or seven kinds of maize, wheat, barley, peas, French beans, the common potatoe, the sweet potatoe, called camote, and an almost endless variety of garden products. Of fruits, they have the orange, lemon, citron, pomegranate, peach, grape, wild and cultivated, apples, pears, quinces, plumbs, melons, &c. &c. Oats and rye, strawberries, gooseberries, and currants, with many others of our vegetables and fruits, are unknown here. Saffron, cayenne, sarsaparella, indigo, cochineal, honey, with numerous dying plants, cotton, pepper, tobacco and the sugar-cane, are found in abundance. The sugar is refined in a way that makes it nearly equal to our double refined, by a process invented by Doctor Columbus. The fields are richly clothed, and pasturage is abundant. The woods are covered with eternal verdure, and produce a vast variety of wild fruits, many of which are turned to good account by distillation. Even the fences to the corrals for

the cattle in this rich country, yield a molasses named in the province *arope*, in which they preserve their table sweets. The plains abound in curious and rare herbs and plants, the qualities of some of which are undiscovered, and the lower parts of the mountains have many species which might be made useful and adopted in Europe, but are wholly unknown there at present.

In this delightful region, the animal kingdom is not less rich than the vegetable. There are not finer horned cattle in any part of the world. Previous to the late disturbances they were hunted for mere sport, for their numbers became a nuisance. Their value was in the hide and tallow, and they fetched then only about twelve rials, or six shillings, whereas a cow will now sell for ten or twelve dollars; small bullocks from thirteen to fifteen, and those full grown or trained for work, twenty. The horses are hardy, and have excellent wind; but they

are not handsome, nor are the mules equal to those of San Juan, and other mountain breeds. The stock of sheep and goats is much neglected, as well as that of hogs, yet every thing thrives that receives the least attention. Numbers of wild cattle still run in the more unfrequented parts of the province. Wild boars, deer, and guanacos abound. The viscunna, llama, and alpacha, do not extend their breed to the mountains of the frontier. Of wild animals, they have the tyger or rather jaguar; wild cats, the anta, and armadillo are plentiful. Of game, they have partridges, pheasants, wild turkies, wild fowl of all kinds, and many varieties unknown in Europe. The birds are numberless, and of most beautiful plumage: many sing charmingly, but unlike in note any I ever before heard. There are upwards of twenty rivers in this province, which uniting together, I believe form the Santiago del Estero, and abound in excellent fish, almost all varying from the European spe-

cies except the eel. It is computed, that at a small expense a junction between the Santiago and Parana might be formed, and thus a navigation be effected all the way to Buenos Ayres.

Notwithstanding the prodigality of nature in this delightful province, the inhabitants live in sloth and comparative misery. The country people feed chiefly on beef and maize, and trouble themselves no further. The towns are very ill supplied as respects variety, the butchers bringing little but beef into the market. If I expressed a wish to have mutton or lamb, it was necessary to send for it from the country the day before. During the fruit season, I was informed that there is a complete inundation of the products of the orchard, garden, field, and wood, while at other times, there is trouble in obtaining any of them. Oranges and apples alone we found abundant, in the season we were there. Every one complains of the inconvenience, but no one

sets about remedying it. It would be a very easy task, with common plodding industry, to assist nature in rearing her offspring a little earlier, by bestowing some small care from art. It is almost an afflicting sight to observe this people in the very garden of the universe, spending their time thus lazily. Their idle habits were doubtless imbibed from their old masters. Who in Europe are a more idle race than the Spanish, save, perhaps, the Biscayans? Their idleness, too, must have increased in this land of milk and honey, where nature offered necessaries to their hands.

The people of Tucuman pride themselves much upon the signature in their city in 1816, at a general congress, of the declaration of South American independence, as far as includes the provinces of the Rio de la Plata. This pride, however, must be damped at the scene around them. Enough of the lamentable effects of intestine wars is left to show how fatal

they are to prosperity, and to the moral character of a community. Tucuman was the granary, and, from time to time, the chief resource of the armies destined to drive the Spaniards out of Upper Peru. It was the head quarters of General Belgrano for six months together, and a greater moral evil could not have fallen upon it. In all countries where the influence of the monks and priests over the people exists, no advancement in public liberty, no iota of freedom can be permanent. By secret influence these vermin will raise disturbances, or counteract the best plans for the public welfare, that they may keep their influence, or share their accustomed profits from vulgar credulity. The French revolutionists were aware of this and took the most severe and cruel means to counteract them. The chiefs of independence in South America were equally aware of the arts of the enemies of their cause, and that until they were com-

pletely crushed, a permanent state of security for their liberties was a chimera. By the works of the philosophers and the inflammable writers of other nations, they infused a spirit of hatred of the order into the people, and established as a watch-word "down with the monks." The obligations of religion were undermined, every weapon was directed to the extermination of the unshaken foes of the revolution. The ignorant and depraved set no bounds to their conduct, every thought of religion and morals, of future welfare and its effects upon unborn generations, were out of the question. Many of the youth of this province have, in consequence, been brought up in a neglect of all religion, and some are absolute theists, a circumstance more conspicuous here than in any other state of the union, because that which was the cause of the revolution was stronger in resistance here, and its power more difficult to overcome than elsewhere. Such are the inevitable effects of similar revolutions, the origin of which lies deeper. We

inquire, on seeing these things, if revolutions cannot be avoided altogether, and this leads us to the primary cause of the mischief—the curse of absolute sway and its never-failing rule of action—the drawing the bonds of the oppressed tighter, as a means of greater security to power, until they snap asunder and find no limits in re-action. Crowns that forbid the march of the people from keeping pace with that of knowledge, which try to stifle by the exertion of despotic power, the groans of the oppressed, and foolishly imagine that innovation is fatal to their interests because it is favourable to the human mind and to the governed, must be the victims of revolutions for they treat with haughty contempt the only means of avoiding them—the relaxation of power and the ceasing to rule with injustice.

Nothing but the hope of the future benefit which will arise out of these political storms, can reconcile the mind to the devastations which they cause. Civil and ecclesiastical oppression

were the primary causes of the evils which still are visible in Tucuman. It is impossible not to deplore the loss of the many beneficial institutions which the current of the revolution bore away with viler things. Many of these of a charitable character were cherished by some of the convents as appendages to themselves. Many useful men of talent have fallen degraded into obscurity in the general devastation. Dr. Perez, the prior of Merced, the only monastic order remaining in Tucuman, and his brother, men so estimable that they are still tolerated on account of their irreproachable lives and characters, (since from the common examples of delinquency there must exist many bright exceptions) live in daily expectation that the possessions which remain to them will be confiscated, as sacrifices to relieve the burdens which press heavily upon the people, and seem to increase with every change of the executive. Whether it arise from the depressed condition of the church, from the more amiable and less

temporal character of the clergy remaining here, or that the royalist clergy in this city were always less bigotted than elsewhere, it appears that they possess with the people a much more tolerant spirit than any I observed, except those of Buenos Ayres. But for the influence of an old Jesuit of ninety years of age, a priest named Dr. Moule, and a few other supporters of ancient things, enemies of innovation and improvement, in short mere old women in intellect, a law of Buenos Ayres, permitting foreigners the open enjoyment of their own religious rites, would have been adopted the instant it was proposed.

I have before spoken of the influence of the above junta at Tucuman. The following dialogue between a mother and her daughters exhibits a ludicrous instance of the way in which it is exerted. The donna, on returning from her morning's confession, summoned her daughters

ogether, and wringing her hands in great apparent perturbation of spirit, began:

The Donna. "O, my dear girls, we are all ruined—undone!"

Daughters. "How, dear mamma, what is the matter?"

Donna. "Oh, my dear children, matter enough, Padre M. says the heretics are coming to take possession of our mines first, and afterwards of the whole country. Oh, my dears, what will become of us all?"

Eldest Daughter. "Oh, mamma, is that all? I feared there was something worse; if they do come, be comforted, mamma, they will not hurt us.

Donna. "I do not know that," (*wiping a tear from her parental eye.*) "I do not know that," (*almost overcome with her anxiety.*)

Youngest Daughter. "Oh, don't be alarmed, my dear mamma, we must not believe half that stupid old Padre says about the English. I

remember you told us when we were little girls, and on the authority of the same holy Padre, too, that the English had tails like devils, or monkeys at least."

Eldest Daughter. "I remember it too, mamma. And now, my dear mamma, we have often seen Englishmen, have you ever observed tails to them?"

Donna. "It is true, my dear, that I never did, and that I must have been imposed upon by such a story. They look much as other men. Still, my dears, I am convinced there is much danger from them."

Daughters. "Why so, mamma? if the first story is nonsense the second is likely to be so too."

Donna. "No, no, my dears. Do you think the Padre would have come and even gone upon his knees to me, to solicit my influence against them, if there is not danger? Neither he nor the father Jesuit would have done so before the

business in the sala came on, if there had not been some reason for it."

Eldest Daughter. "O, mamma, but do listen to me. Do you see any thing so very dangerous in the persons or manners of these English?"

Donna. "None at all, my dear; I like them very much, they are very agreable; what a pity they can never go to Heaven!"

Youngest Daughter. "So much their greater misfortune, mamma; but consider what with the war and emigration to Buenos Ayres, there are ten ladies to one gentleman left here; and if the five hundred English they talk of should come, we shall perhaps some of us get husbands, and an Englishman will be better than none, you know."

Eldest Daughter. "And only think, mamma, of the merit and pleasure of converting a young heretic to the true faith."

Donna. "There is something in that, my dear, I allow. Well, you will have it your

own way, children, I perceive. It is useless for me to argue the matter with you any further!"

The Tucumaneses, in general, possess a fine manly spirit, and a high sense of honour. They are very kind and hospitable to foreigners; and that they are great admirers of the English character is plain, in the offer made by some of them of donations of land to any individuals of literary, scientific, or ingenious pursuits in life, who will come and settle in their beautiful country. Though endowed with strong natural talent they do not seem conscious of it. I never heard a Tucumanese boast of any thing but the beauty and fineness of his country, although in a sad state of devastation. I have heard many of them lament the indolent habits of the people, and their want of education. They all seemed to me to indulge a hope, with an exception or two already mentioned, that the fertility of their soil, its capability of producing

any thing, its variety of productions, and fine climate, would ensure it a preference to English emigrants. As to jealousy or dislike of us, I never witnessed an instance of it, except as before expressed.

Deep rooted, nay imperishable is the recollection of my feelings as I contemplated the rich and varied scenery of this delightful country from the arena of its own unparalleled beauty. In point of grandeur and sublimity it is not, I believe, surpassed on earth. Were I permitted by taste to indulge in hacknied allegory, a favourite figure with the South Americans, I would paint the majestic Anconquiqua, sitting with her head above the clouds, and capped with eternal snows; her bosom teeming with riches of gold and silver, above the rich *falda* clothing; her lap aproned with unfading verdure; her feet slippered in the velvet culture of the woods and plains—one of the finest, if not the very finest of objects that Nature ever formed.

The noble range of the Sierra extends longitudinally about thirty-five leagues in this province, and continues its northern course through Salta to Potosi, in an almost uninterrupted chain. It thus forms one of those vast lines of mountain elevation, for which America is so remarkable. The Anconquiqua of Tucuman consists of a double range of mountains; in the upper range of which, the mineral districts of the Cerro Bayo, Cerro Negro, and others mentioned in the contract with the Tucumanese government, are situated, *(see appendix)*. For the rich deposits here, they refer to the extant mineralogical works, published heretofore by authority, rather than to any local information, or testimony of the existing inhabitants, which might be offered for interest sake. For the abandonment by the natives, two reasons are given by the Tucumanese. One is, that nature has supplied them with manifold gifts, which deter them from encountering the inclemency of the moun-

tains; the other is the slavish suffering of a miner's life, to which they are not at all inclined. Another evidence of the worth of these mines is furnished by tradition, derived from the testimony of an old Indian still living, whose memory runs back to the events themselves, of about eighty years standing. He says the mines were abandoned in consequence of a terrible earthquake, which destroyed the whole town in the Sierra, and so frightened the inhabitants that they one and all abandoned the works, and never could be got to reside there again. In corroboration of this statement, the ruins still remain. This fact is also confirmed by the tenor of this old mountaineer's mode of life. He exists in the mountains, nobody knows how, except that he brings occasionally small quantities of gold to barter for implements and necessaries. The characteristic policy of an Indian's life is secrecy; but such is the dislike of a miner's life in the more fertile districts of Tucuman, that

the very name of a miner is a kind of stigma on an individual, and even prevents his mingling in the better part of society, in his own class. No one ever thought it worth while to dog this poor fellow to his fastnesses, with a view of obtaining or sharing in the profits of his mode of life.

But laying conjecture aside as to the cause of the desertion of the mines in question, the more material fact of their value is undeniable, and established from sources which leave no room for doubtful argument among the people of the country. The mining mania which broke out in England, had no sooner been communicated to this distant part of the world, than parties were formed by subscription, and individuals united together to go and explore what had so long and unaccountably been neglected. It was resolved to examine and declare what had been and were the best mining grounds. A good deal of time and labour were employed, as well as expense incurred, and much valuable information fur-

nished. Unfortunately the now adverse disposition to mining in England, is likely to interfere with every view which might have been reasonably entertained as to their value.

The observations that excellent practical mineralogist, Mr. Scott, has made, who had been four years at work on the Catarmarca side of the Anconquiqua, prove that besides gold, silver, and copper, these Sierras produce iron, tin, lead, zinc, cobalt, alum, &c. in considerable quantities. On a recent excursion to examine the product of the hills to the north-west of Tucuman, taken by this gentleman, there were observed indications most interesting to the geologist; lime, gypsum, slate, good stone for building, in short, all that in this teeming and rich country could be wished as adjuncts to mining or agricultural speculation, and which never entered a moment into the minds of the Tucumaneses in estimating the value of their

mines, but which were additional and most important inducements to vigorous operations on the part of British companies which could estimate their importance.

In examining and duly weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the province of Tucuman, as a station for the establishment of a mining company and mining operations, the following impediments have been urged on the disadvantageous side. First, the distance of the sea-ports of communication with Europe. Secondly, the want of a mining population; and, Thirdly, the danger alleged from Indian depredations in crossing the pampas.

The foregoing objections, however, disappear, on a close examination into facts. In respect to the distance from Buenos Ayres as an outlet, these obstacles only apply to carriage by land. From every part of the province of Tucuman, the carriage by land to Buenos Ayres (and it answers to send wood in planks by such convey-

ance, in which there is a very lucrative trade carried on) is eighty dollars per load of forty quintals. This is at the rate of eight shillings the hundred weight English. This price in silver bars would not therefore be an object, looking at the worst side of the question. An established company however, with mended roads, and a few bridges over the pantanos, or gullies, would be able eventually to establish its own line of posts, with carriages better formed for the traffic, lighter than the clumsy ones now used by the natives, and able to perform the journey easily in one half the time consumed at present. The carriages now employed, are such unwieldly machines, that they only crawl along, and if they chance to get out of order, or stick in a slough, are often delayed a month on the spot where the accident takes place. The second objection, the want of a mining population, may be admitted to a certain extent, at the commencement of an undertaking. At first, a few

could be obtained to begin with, but sufficient numbers to commence directly on a large scale might be wanting. For every purpose of cautious working, however, men enough could be obtained both from Tupiza and Potosi, if not from Rioja and Coquimbo. The fatal rock which has shipwrecked English foreign companies, has been the too extravagant scale, on which they have begun their undertakings. The most prodigal and useless outfits, the most ill-founded notions, involving heavy expences, have been their bane. They seem not to have dreamed that mining is a slow operation, and more than any other requires the husbanding of resources. The richest mines cannot make returns directly as they are opened, and fill the pockets of adventurers, as if they had nothing to do but to gather up the precious ores, though in time they may return a thousand fold.

There is on the spot here an idle, but ex-

tremely tractable peasantry, willing to aid in every collateral work, whether upon the surface of the ground, or in the mines themselves. A couple of rials a day would procure any number of these that might be needful. At this rate, exclusive of their food, which in this prolific country, and with their temperate habits, is hardly worth rating, the whole might reasonably be effected under the superintendence of two or three active or intelligent Europeans. It would indeed require a little time to set matters going, but that is all. At every mine, a *tiendre* or shop must be established, where necessaries are sold, and by this alone, these people would pay back half their wages again to the proprietors.

Thirdly, the danger of attacks on the convoys travelling, from the wild Indians on the pampas, is much exaggerated. These marauders, however, can only commit their depredations at the fall of the year, when the thistles are dead. At

that season, during the commencement of operations, the carriage of the metals might cease. Their depredations will terminate entirely when the people of Buenos Ayres shall have adjusted their dispute respecting tribute; and even if the chance of an attack was always to exist, convoys strong enough might be sent, with a few firm men, armed with rifles to repel them. In any case the dernier resort of cutting the traces and galloping off would be sufficient, leaving the precious metals, which would still be safe, these naked Indians being unable to remove them. They could be no where safer than on the pampas, until the owner returned for them. The Indians take nothing but what is of use to them, and easily portable. They might indeed in a solitary case set fire to a waggon; but this would not make the matter worse. I have here put an extreme case. Were inquiry to be made how the precious metals have been conveyed from time immemorial, from the rich districts

of Rioja and Catamarca, except by the mode alluded to, despite of all the obstacles now enumerated, the answer must be, by this very route, and in the manner I state. What has been done without inconvenience so long, may therefore be done again, if it cannot be improved upon.

About a third part of a league from the summit of the Cerró Bayo, one of the mining mountains, flows the first stream of water, sufficient for grinding and amalgamating ores. From its height and rapidity it is not so convenient here as lower down the mountain, where for one or two leagues there is a fall adequate to drive any machinery which can be wanted. Plenty of wood for all purposes, even for smelting, and a soil of black mould upon clay for cultivation. There are extensive spots, with thriving pasturage for horses, mules, and other cattle; in short, every facility for the establishment of works on a large scale. The position called

Potrero ad Entro, is both temperate and healthy, and is distant only six leagues from the nearest village, Alpachi. The mules would have only the distance of three leagues to convey the ores to La Chacra de Pepe, whence they could be carried direct to Buenos Ayres. The mineral, del Cerro Negro, is distant from El Pina, the nearest river, about two leagues. It possesses similar advantages to that of Potrero, and has the same length of carriage roads.

From the information which I obtained of Mr. Scott, I found that these mines had not been worked to such an extent as to render machinery necessary. Tools for simple labour seem only needful at first, such as picks, gads, hammers, wedges, blasting implements, and gunpowder. Even a common windlass would not be immediately wanted. A few intelligent miners from Europe, skilled in the knowledge of mineral productions, would be desirable, and I am of opinion that Germans would be preferable.

They are better versed in the products of mines, where novelty of production must be constantly occurring, than Englishmen are. They are more hardy, patient, and enduring, and far less nice and punctilious about trifles. Cornishmen are intractable if put the least out of their way. They harmonize together "one and all," but not with strangers; and their dispositions and habits by no means correspond with the tried, placid tempers and dispositions of the South Americans.

A scientific assayer, furnished with a travelling laboratory, a man of skill in every branch of mineralogy, would be most desirable; indeed such an one could not be dispensed with; and if he liked the pursuit, the finest field in the world would be open to him.

The province of Tucuman, bad as the by-roads are in many parts, at present, is accessible by wheel carriages to the foot of the mountains in which the mines are situated; and is every

where practicable for mules. The Sierras, it is true, are steep and intersected by deep glens and ravines, obstacles occurring in all parts of the Cordilleras, and not peculiar to these mountains alone. The most remarkable feature in their appearance, at least in the eastern Anconquiqua, is the rich clothing of wood and verdure up to the extreme limit of vegetation.

I was indebted to the kindness of Don Thomas Uogarte, a member of the chamber of representatives, for a high treat in a morning's excursion among the forests which skirt the base of these mountains. The woods which we visited are an estate of his family, beyond the plains, about seven leagues from the city. We galloped over this distance in a sort of Lord Mayor vehicle of the old school, clumsily fashioned enough. The ride was completed in a couple of hours, when we arrived not as I expected to do, at a family mansion, but a very simple rancho habitation, adapted for the ser-

vice of the capitaz and peons. It would be strange in England to hear of a valuable estate, park, and pleasure grounds, without a house and establishment for a family; but it was literally the case here. In this country, however, the objects of style and comfort soon yield to another predominant passion of an Englishman, independence, which is fully gratified in the peculiar freedom of a Gaucho's life. The luxuriant fare of the London Tavern, the luxuries of the Eastern feast, or the cookery of M. Very, of Palais Royal notoriety, are poor to the healthy relish of the rancho fare; nor do they dwell half so pleasantly on the recollection. Here nature is prodigal in supplying the real necessities of man, and tempts him to her bounty. Don Thomas wished to place this property at the disposal of the company, for which I was acting in South America. It consisted of eight leagues of rich plain woodlands, and several presumed virgin mineral ridges, the whole being a most

compact and desirable possession for the employment of a capital, which might be from five to ten thousand pounds. With such a base for operations, there was security against the failure of any mining operations, and an additional means of employing money, or repairing any loss by mining casualties, from other sources of speculation less uncertain. The capital laid out would be principally employed in restocking the Llanuras,* in the creation of suitable buildings for a home farm, and in the establishment of a saw mill or two.

After we had dined, we repaired to an eminence a little distance off, which commanded a fine central view of the property, from the side next the pampa, where the distant horizon was seen, a sea line of an ocean of land, softening away at an immense distance, from the foreground beneath our feet. On the other side stretched hills and mountains, which towered up

* Pastures.

into the heavens, children of Andes, the giant of the western star, who

> "With meteor standard to the winds unfurl'd,
> Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world."

There they were before me, those pillars of the universe, of which Ulloa, and other travellers, have written so much, and of which inspired poets have sung! These wonders of creation, it is hoped, may still be explored by the remote English, be subjected to the tool of the miner, and administer to the commercial wealth of their country. Gazing on the nearest chain and its towering summits, Don Thomas and myself erected airy castles on their huge sides. We excavated rich veins of ore, we erected furnaces for smelting, we saw in imagination a crowd of workmen moving like busy insects along the eminences, and fancied the wild and vast region peopled by the energies

of Britons from a distance of nine or ten thousand miles.

It perhaps matters little to the reader, that I should note my disappointment at the failure of my hopes, and the destruction of the day-dreams I cherished at this moment, or others of a similar character in which I indulged when sojourning in the delicious province of Tucuman.

> The mind erects an edifice to day,
> That ere to-morrow moulders in decay;
> To day transporting hope delights the breast,
> To-morrow disappointment is its guest:
> As the sun's glory gilds the morning cloud
> That evening quenches in night's gloomy shroud.

Whether I convey my idea in prose or in metre, as long as it is conveyed it matters not. I do not know why a sailor, having a musical ear, and a few jingling words in his head, should not give them vent, unless indeed he fears Neptune may evince his ill will to naval poets, as he did to Camoens, and to that British bard whose

name is immortal. Both the angry god ship wrecked, perhaps for the sin of rhime, and poor Falconer perished for it—heaven can tell how. Who knows but it was designed as a warning to us not to make doggrel verses, but to keep a good look out, and mind the helm!

After a glorious field fire-side, made for mere pastime in this liberty inspiring region, and in the bosom of nature, we retired, not, reader, to a feather bed, to bury ourselves in the down, but to a deliciously refreshing snore on a rancho floor. They who have been accustomed to the woods, in those parts of the temperate climates that border upon the tropics, well know the fact, that what with being awoke by the rich piping of birds of every note and tune, the inhaling the serene cool air of the most delightful atmosphere on earth, with nature reposing around in stillness of beauty, there is an exhilarating sensation experienced, which language cannot describe. It is as though the

soul and body had at the moment reached perfect happiness, and no wish of earth or heaven was left ungratified. It is as if sin and sorrow were only a name, and the soul was pure of transgression. There is no enjoyment on earth can surpass this feeling. Rising thus, it is not extraordinary that the temper should remain affected by it, that every thing throughout the beautiful day which follows such a dawn so witnessed, should cheer and gratify; that homely fare, if we have no other, should be eaten with a zest at breakfast, and soul and body be happy. Those who rouse from soft beds, in carpeted rooms, and in varying climes, know little of this most exquisite of earthly sensations.

We mounted our cavallos at seven o'clock, and after proceeding about half a league trailing through the thick-tangled grass, we gained the high road. Here we were entertained by stories of our capitaz, respecting the animal they misdenominate tiger (juagar), which is met

with in the forests, and which, with the condor, commits fearful ravages among the cattle. The condor will often attack them in the open plain, while the quadruped awaits them in the woods, whither they retire from the noontide sun. The mode of destroying the condor is of course by stratagem, but that of killing the animal is remarkable for the courage and prowess displayed. It is conclusive of as much of that noble quality of man, namely personal bravery, in the Gaucho, as must place him among the most elevated of his species in this respect. It was impossible to contemplate the capitaz, as he gave us an account of his adventure with one of these animals without interest. The equestrian character and address of the Gaucho have been noted by all who have travelled in his vast and wild country. Whether he hang by his spur to pick up a "cochillo" or knife, from the ground, when riding, or is seen entangling the wild cattle with his "lasso," he is equally at home, and cool as

a lady in her drawing-room—his motions are alike elegant and graceful. But when he has a story to relate from his saddle, he displays such a flexibility of body, turning towards you with such natural, yet fine gestures, such an expression speaking better than his words, that he seems, thus employed on his steed, a compound of the gentleman and the peasant, an intermixture of both characters, so blended as to produce a most striking and agreeable whole.

The common mode of killing the animal in question, is to trace him to his lair by the wool (if it be a sheep he has carried off), which is discovered upon the brambles when the victim is taken, and borne away without a struggle. If it be a calf, they have a species of bloodhound, trained to the sport, which is staunch to scent. On finding the enemy, the Gaucho chooses the most convenient position to receive him upon the point of a bayonet or rude spear, at the first spring he makes. The dogs then drive him out, he

springs at the Gaucho, who receives him kneeling, with his eyes fixed on the animal's, and with such coolness, that there is scarcely an instance of failure. The animal gets staked at the instant the Gaucho, with a nimbleness of which none but an equestrian race like his is capable, shifts rapidly on one side, and the creature is quickly dispatched by the assistance of the dogs and people at hand.

In a recent instance, related by our capitaz, the business was not so quickly completed. The animal lay stretched at full length on the ground, like a gorged cat. Instead of shewing anger and attacking his enemies with fury, he was playful, and disposed rather to parley with the dogs with good humour, than to take their attack in sober earnestness. He was now fired upon, and a ball lodged in his shoulder, on which he sprung so quickly on his watching assailant, that he not only buried the bayonet in his body, but tumbled over the capitaz, who held it, and they

floundered on the ground together, the man being completely in his clutches. "I thought," said the brave fellow, "I was no longer a capitaz, while I held my arm up to protect my throat, which the animal seemed in the act of seizing; but when I expected to feel his fangs in my flesh, the green fire of his eyes which blazed upon me, flashed out in a moment. He fell on me and expired, at the very instant I thought myself lost for ever."

The approach to the coverts of the forest where these animals lurk, resembles much the outskirt plantations or game preserves of an English gentleman's domain, except that the trees, shrubs, and plants are infinitely more varied. There are many, which are trained in our green-houses, and some which we have introduced on our lawns. Our advance, for many a league, was through gradations of trees, the branches of which, ascending higher and higher up the side of the mountains, reached at length the heights

where the walnut, lime, and oak grow, and the red cedar begins to spread wide its majestic foliage. Here, far better than in the stinted park of the British villa, and backed by mountain masses of unequalled variety and grandeur, is Milton's description of Eden true to the letter:—

> ——————over head up grew
> Insuperable heighth of loftiest shade,
> Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm—
> A silvan scene, and as the ranks ascend
> Shade above shade, a woody theatre
> Of stateliest view.

My friend, Don Thomas, now thought he had carried me far enough, to extort from me some token of admiration, and certainly nothing could exceed the beauty of the vegetative scene around me. There were no trees, however, which at all equalled in size the giants of the forest which I have seen in the Terra Australia, where they are of prodigious bulk, and recollecting this, I made a show of discovering his

want of knowledge in the productions of other countries, and insinuated that he from this cause had an overweening partiality for those of his own. He thereupon gave me to understand that I had as yet seen nothing, and we advanced another half league with little alteration in the scenery, when he brought me suddenly upon a grove of those stupendous trees, which throw up a clean trunk of a hundred feet, and I am afraid to say how much more, but still many feet beyond that elevation. I could not repress my admiration from Don Thomas any longer, nor keep back the just tribute of my applause. Such vegetative magnificence I never before saw. I gazed until my eyes ached at these forest patriarchs, mossed with age, encircled with creepers, and studded with parasites like stars in all parts, trunk and branch. They seemed coeval with old time, and supplied associations of age, which the castled ruin inspires in Europe, but which would be vainly looked

for here. Could these trees, like those of the poets, have spoken, I should have demanded of them, as I felt an almost irresistible desire to do, how long they had stood? whether from creation's dawn? Whatever they might have answered, they must have trembled, had they known my thoughts, and found that their end was well nigh come, for Don Thomas and myself were calculating, that a few years of a company's employment of capital, would make desperate havock among them. Timber, as before remarked, even for Buenos Ayres, is in demand from this spot. Fate willed it otherwise, and these patriarchs are still growing; though their doom was then looked upon as almost certain;—but as Burns writes—

> The schemes of mice and men
> Gang aft awry.

It is said, on the authority of Don Ignacio Nuñez, that there are fifty-three kinds of useful timber here, and sixty-four different species may

be enumerated. One of these is the valuable red ebony, called here "Granadillo;" Nuñez states that in 1816 seven persons tried by joining hands, and could barely enclose the trunk of one within their circuit. Now, although I saw none of such a prodigious girth as this, Don Thomas informed me that there were some a vast deal larger in another part of the forest, and I feel no reason to believe he told me what was incorrect. The variety of species seemed to me endless. Among the principal vegetable novelties that are found here are the constant succession of underling trees and shrubs, which grow beneath the larger sons of the forest and the innumerable family of rich climbers running from tree to tree, and linking them so beautifully together, that it might be supposed they had been trained by the hand of fancy or of the amateur botanist, to gratify his feeling for his favourites. Perhaps there could not have been a better season for a trip to the forest, than

the time I thus visited it. The orange-trees were in full bearing, and might be said to beam radiant with their golden fruit. To an Englishman the fictions of the Arabian Nights, or some land of fairy imagination, seemed to be realized. Nothing that the mind can dwell upon could surpass this scene in beauty and luxuriance. I could have wished to linger in those enchanting scenes for months together, and a true lover of botany would not leave their delicious shades, could he help it, for years.

While proceeding amid this delightful scenery, we diverged at length in a zig-zag track through a dense thicket, following a cattle track, until we arrived on the borders of a considerable mountain stream flowing through the very heart of the forest. The stillness around, broken only by the murmuring of the water, that ran coolly and darkly along; the novelty of the vegetative forms to the eye, the serenity of the

atmosphere, and the soothing effect produced on the mind by the union of the whole, left nothing for even the most gifted poet's fancy to add in the way of attraction, to the bowers and beauties of this enchanting spot. A great part of the stream ran under a green arcade of trees, new to the European eye, of richly tinted foliage, and often quite novel in form, while evergreens filled up the sides among their trunks. The branches met over the water thickly interlaced, and through the fretted roof, a sunbeam was very rarely reflected on the water, but it bore the green hue, and was the "Rio verde, rio verde," of the Spanish ballad. Thus the current flowed in the centre of a most charming avenue, cool, dim, and stretching away in grateful perspective. Nothing could be more pleasing than the look up and down this arborescent enclosure, so happily accompanied by water and shade, and forming such a contrast to the clear cloudless sky and warm sunbeams without. The embodyings

of the Greek poets, even the dreams of the most visionary enthusiasts would be found realized here. What a domicile for the nymphs of the woods! How charmingly their slender forms would harmonize with the green umbrageous shade of this natural arcade, so far outvying all that art has or can ever achieve!

I have already mentioned the number of parasitical plants that wreathe, or studd, or depend from the branches of the larger trees, especially where they have most room to flourish. The principal of these is a genus of the Hexandria Monogynia, called Tillandsia, bearing a likeness to the aloe in general appearance, but in the leaves and stem, and bell-shaped flowers, resembling the lilly, yet considerably smaller, terminating at the stem in clusters. The leaves spring from the root, and the plant has the property of secreting a quantity of pure water, which is so good, that the woodmen and peons who work in the forests, never take any

with them. When they wish to drink, they perforate the plant near the root, and the fluid gushes out in a stream, clear as crystal, and in quantity proportioned to the size of the plant itself. From the best judgment I could form by the horn goblet in which the men caught the liquid, I should think the quantity might be about two quarts from the fullest plants. The heart of this plant and the surrounding leaves are so tough, that the knife is with difficulty made to penetrate them horizontally for the purpose of examining the cells containing the water, but if thrust in vertically, it enters as easily as into the stem of the plantain tree. The interior of the cells or reservoirs is of a cane-like succulent nature. The natives could give me no account of the probable duration of this plant, or if the water was to be obtained at all seasons. I could not discover whether the aqueous deposit is a natural secretion from the earth or atmosphere, or whether it is collected

by the pores of the plant during a fall of rain—the idea most natural, were it not for the sheltered situation in which these excrescences are found to flourish; but where they grow little rain can reach them, and moreover the natives in their accounts did not accord with this opinion.

I lament that we were very unsuccessful in our attempts to examine the plant minutely in its internal arrangements. The tubes and vessels were always much torn and injured before we could penetrate into it, and unfortunately after succeeding in the preservation of a dried specimen, it was either thrown away by my servant on board ship, or lost on landing. This is a circumstance I greatly regret, as I believe the plant to be unknown in this country, even by general description.

CHAPTER VII.

Dinner on the birth-day of George IV.—Ball given to the ladies of the city—Manners—The character of the people capable of being improved—Prices of labour—Of land—Mechanics bad workmen—Description of the city of Tucuman—Want of instructors—Population—Sufferings in the late troubles—Effects remaining behind—The present governor, Col. Lopez—Animosities and feuds—Reflections—Set out for Salta—Parting attentions of the citizens—Bivouac—Scenery—Bipos o' Ticucho—Miserably scanty population—Tarncas—Tertullia—A governor shot—Don Puche's hospitality—Arrival at Salta.

WHILE receiving civilities from the inhabitants of Tucuman, and pursuing with all convenient expedition the business of my employers, the 12th of August arrived. I thought the circumstance of its being the birth-day of the king of England might not be unappropriately improved to our advantage, if I invited

the governor, members of the sala or chamber, and some of the principal inhabitants to a dinner, in return for the manifold civilities I had received from them during my sojourn in their city. To support me on this occasion I had an excellent second in Mr. George Brown, a fine specimen of an Englishman, both in respect to personal and mental endowments.

The best fare which the country could produce was set on the table. The good feeling, mirth, and pleasant interchange of civilities displayed on the occasion, could in no part of the world be surpassed. The governor took his seat on my right hand; on my left sat the gallant General Alvear, a high-bred cavalier, of finished manners and lofty bearing. The General was merely passing through the city as ambassador from Buenos Ayres, to felicitate Bolivar on the termination of the Peruvian war, and to greet his arrival at Potosi. On delivering the first toast, "The Patriot Star of the West,

which, having surmounted the Peruvian Cordillera, beams brightly in its ascent, to a glorious meridian," I took notice of an absurd rumour which had been industriously circulated, namely, that the English, under pretence of mining, would soon take possession of the whole country. "Far," said I, "generous Tucumaneses! far from disavowing such an object, I shall endeavour to establish the correctness of the report. The English are going to take possession of your country, not, indeed, by force of arms against the government; but by a mode of conquest which will be equally beneficial to you and themselves, by bringing the resources of their capital and industry as machinery to raise the hidden treasures of your neglected mountains, and to render your impoverished plains fruitful. They will take possession of your country by placing it under the rule of a spirit of diligence, active labour, and sound moral feeling. They will take possession of your country when they

settle amongst you, by mingling British blood with that of the fair and lovely daughters of Tucuman."

I cannot find words to describe the satisfaction which this allusion to a ridiculous rumour afforded the company, except by saying that my own subsequent chagrin at the disappointment of such hopes, fully equalled it in excess.

I then gave as a toast, "The most glorious monarch in the world, because reigning over a free people—George the Fourth." This toast was drank with such enthusiasm, in the English mode, that the four times four which accompanied it made the walls of the room re-echo, the band playing "Viva la Patria!" as it did after the first toast given. General Alvear then arose and proposed "Success to the recent union between the two countries, and prosperity to Great Britain, that noble and indestructible barrier between the world and slavery!" This toast was followed by sentiments well and loftily

expressed, and which would honour the head and heart of any man that ever lived. Our next toast was "George Canning, the practical, liberal, and enlightened statesman, who has guaranteed South American independence." Tumultuous "Vivas," the breaking of glasses, and other symptoms of exceeding satisfaction, were exhibited. All present, even in this remote city, seemed aware how much they owed to the intellect and genius of our distinguished minister. "The brave General Miller," who had gained immortal laurels in the service of South American independence. "The governor of Tucuman." "The president and members of the sala." "The ladies of Tucuman," and a vast variety of toasts, all in the English manner, followed, which this kind and excellent people seemed to receive with high pleasure. The evening concluded with the destruction of every glass, decanter, and plate in the room, a custom here (occasionally, too, among the old Spa-

niards), implying that the utensils, however expensive, must not again be used, lest they be prophaned on less amicable and social occasions. The inhabitants of this fine climate are alive to the nicest impulses of sensation, and it was greatly to this character that they owed the high tone of national feeling which supported them through such difficulties as they encountered in the cause of independence. Their constancy and courage, their patience and perseverance, were distinguished amid the ruin produced by a shock which the country will take a long time to recover, but from which tenfold benefit must ultimately accrue; a generous, high-minded people, like the Tucumaneses, cannot remain stationary. The gratification of this day I shall never forget; it was an æra in my existence alone worth living for. I gloried in being the first Englishman to bring together, at the convivial board, the conflicting parties in their city, who forgetting all personal animosities,

joined in the conviviality with heart and soul, and parted like brethren.

My success with the ladies, in this respect, was not quite so complete as with the gentlemen. Still, considering the tenacious character of the softer sex, something towards it was effected. I gave them a ball on the following evening. The lady patroness, Donna Josepha, condescended to unbend a little in my behalf; and on the whole it was a scene to be remembered in the fashionable annals of Tucuman, and appeared to produce a favourable impression of the British character. Bright as the evening was, eyes yet brighter sparkled there, sweet and arch lips smiled, and graceful forms floated in the giddy mazes of the dance, which would not have dishonoured Almack's. The bayle or ball was opened by the Governor and General Alvear dancing a double minuet with two lovely creatures, of whom even St. James's might have been envious. Then followed neither a gover-

nor nor a general, but the giver of the fête with the lady patroness, as humbly as his exertions could second those of the donna, in whom there was no lack of elegance, nor of that touching beauty of carriage which is so remarkable in the fair of this charming climate. We were supported by the accomplished Englishman already named, who was the partner of one of the most distinguished beauties of Tucuman. A Spanish country dance succeeded, and formal ceremony yielded to bland courtesy, hilarity, and sentiment, in the grace and fascination of the South American waltz. The room, though one of the largest in the city, was incapable of affording the company space for chairs; many therefore were obliged to rest themselves by sitting on the carpet. This may sound strange to English ears, but the carpet seemed to the Tucumanese ladies as much a seat of ease as an ottoman is with us. I only notice this circumstance here, though scarcely worth recording, because it is a mark of

the manners of a people little known in England even by name, and a practice which a year or two more spent in intercourse with us, and in copying our fashions, may obliterate and even shock a fair Tucumanese to be reminded of—thus pass away customs! Thus primeval manners are eradicated by others, which have perhaps after all but doubtful advantages over them.

The province of Tucuman, though the smallest of the united provinces of the Rio de la Plata, is by far the best peopled. The population is greatest in the plains, the fertility and plenty of which render the inhabitants free of the necessity of toil or labour. Yet, from the closest observation of their habits, notwithstanding their predilection for ease, and an indolent life, I am persuaded they would soon change to a more active character if sufficient inducements were held out, either in objects of ambition or luxury.

The Tucumaneses are not at all deficient in

energy. In respect to the lower classes, common labourers in any number may be had for from three to five dollars a month; a head capitaz for eight or ten; and labourers for superior work, as woodmen, from six to eight, for the same time; joiners, carpenters, smiths, and handicrafts' men in general are scarce. The native workmen of this class do their work very roughly and bad; yet they have a considerable demand for their labour, from the neighbouring provinces, and, as before observed, for their timber in planks, even as far as Buenos Ayres. These people, too, have quick parts, are extremely docile, easily attached, and would doubtless make excellent servants.

The price of land may be judged by a purchase I made for the company of twenty-five acres of pasture, close to the city, for two hundred and fifty dollars. The best land thus situated may be bought for ten dollars per acre, but estates are to be had in the country for a comparative

song; and I declare, without exaggeration, I know no part of the world where so comfortable an independence may be attained, and so soon, by an industrious Englishman, as here, from the possession of a moderate estate in land. The people of the province of Catamarca, adjoining, repair hither for their maize, wheat, tobacco, &c., which nature raises almost unassisted, yet in many places it is often difficult to obtain any, so little trouble is taken to cultivate a proper quantity. Some even conceal in store the quantity they possess, for by giving to their neighbours they fear that they may want themselves, and they will only dole it out reluctantly to their friends.

The city of Tucuman is like most others in South America, of rectangular form. The public edifices and works are in a wretched state. The arts and sciences are almost unknown, literature, of course, included.* Music

* There was scarcely type enough in their printing office

alone seems to be a little cultivated, but a general spirit of liberality, a wish to improve, and a thirst for knowledge, is very observedly diffusing itself, and will not allow this state of things to last. Unfortunately, the channels of information are few and narrow, and I fear the people are without instructors, or have very ill-chosen ones, though perhaps the best they can obtain.

The population of the province of Tucuman has been estimated from 40 to 45,000, and that of the city from 10 to 12,000, from which latter I should imagine that at least a fourth may be deducted for war and emigration to Buenos Ayres. An estimate that approached to correctness I could not obtain from a single indi-

to compose the contract I made with the government, which though only a single page, cost three days labour. The secretary of state made it a personal request that I would send him a church clock. Yet this city was the see of a bishop!

vidual in the city. Not even the governor could give it to me!

Of the great sacrifices and sufferings of the central provinces of the Rio de la Plata in the cause of the Revolution, there is an abundance of sufficing evidence, lamentable to witness, and continually under the traveller's eye in every city, town, and hamlet, by which he passes: It is, however, to be hoped that the worst is past —that the time is approaching, when these evils will have disappeared, and a regular state of things will subsist. When, in reality, and not in words only, a constitutional government will be established, and wholesome laws. Experience shews that these blessings are not to be attained in a moment. In a country where the chain of society has been so dissevered, time must be given to reunite the links. The metropolitan city has set an illustrious example to the provincial towns. The passions have there been cooled down into calmness and order, and a

federal government will soon be organised, if present expectations can be depended upon. Still it must be acknowledged, that the word "constitution" is either not understood or terribly misused in some places. The disorganised situation of certain of these provinces, notwithstanding the wholesome example of Buenos Ayres, makes this too evident, and such a state of things will not terminate whilst the executive, continually influenced by exclusive party interests, overawes the legislative.

An unallied military usurper, a log king from Jupiter, an Egyptian mummy, and almost a Ferdinand (without apostolics,) would be better as a ruler, than the idol of a particular oligarchy or the tool of a family junta, such as governs some of these provinces. The wounds of the beautiful Tucuman have more than once been torn open, by intestine broils from this cause, when they were thought to be cicatrized, and will be so again, unless, following the example

of the leading province, and more recently of Salta, the people themselves, putting down intriguing families, elect a governor of acknowledged talent, probity, and independence of character.

It is moreover an unfortunate thing, that in these central provinces, the late terrible conflict for freedom, has left behind it in restless minds a warlike spirit, that seems as if it could never be quelled or eradicated. The intestine divisions, the usurpations, and aggressions of every species, with which San Juan, Rioja, Santiago del Estero, Tucuman, Catamarca, and Salta, have been affected, sometimes internally, then against each other, would swell out a volume, as large or larger than the detail of their united operations against their common oppressors.

The present brave governor of Tucuman, is Colonel Lopez, and I have reason to believe he is a man of principle; he owes his elevation to the

Gaucho or popular voice, but it was aided by the sword. The friends and relations of the former governor, although he was an acknowledged tyrant, are at this moment plotting the downfall of Lopez;* yet to him it is they owe any thing like a representative or popular system. He reckons in the Sala as many ene-

* This occurred a few months afterwards, in a way confirming what has been advanced respecting the restless ambition engendered by the revolution.

Colonel Madrid, an officer of considerable military spirit, having signalized himself during those predatory days, when Ramirez, Carrera, &c. were disputing the field with Buenos Ayres, on his return from an expedition to raise a contingent force at Salta, in anticipation of a Brazilian war, deposed Lopez after a sharp action, in which they were engaged together sword in hand. Lopez fled, severely wounded, and Madrid (a Tucumanese, it is said, by birth) obtained easy possession of the Government.

The Government of Buenos Ayres denounced this act of their officer, as one of aggression; but it is to be presumed only on paper, as Colonel Madrid is now busied, in conjunction with General Aranales, in reducing the states of Catamarca, Santiago De Estero, and Cordova, which have recently withdrawn from the Union.

mies as friends, and though destitute of fortune himself, nay very poor, he has never exacted a rial in the way of contribution from the people.

Amidst all this political effervescence, and I fear I must add laxity of moral feeling, there exists a surprising tenacity in upholding the national unity and faith, as far as respects general affairs. Thus the man who from party animosity or private pique would sabre the local governor, would still (from patriotic pride perhaps), sincerely and with true faith, act uprightly in his country's external relations, at any inconvenience, being sensibly alive to its dishonour, and perhaps jealous of a reflection upon the cause of independence on the part of foreigners. Thus the spirit of provincial intestine disturbance is found to affect the general government, less than could be expected. If the wheels on which it runs are clogged to-day, to-morrow they are again free to follow in the usual routine as far as form is

concerned; but provincial welfare is forgotten, the wrecks of the revolution remain uncleared; and the stranger is astonished to see a state of things, in which many sage and able men appear to have stood still, whilst the most fatal domestic feuds were carrying on—just like so many old game cocks watching the younger brood fighting it out.

These petty animosities require a firm hand and a clear head in the executive, to repress them—a master-mind able to remedy the evil, not less by moral influence than physical power. Perhaps most countries so situated, before they could get into a regular track, have been disturbed in a similar manner, but it is notwithstanding a novel and regretful contemplation for an Englishman. The truth is, that the different states of the union are at such distances from each other, that the sub-governments alone can be looked to for restoring a proper state of things, and unfortunately these

are the very sources of the evil, from their inexperience, inefficacy, and turbulent spirit.

Leaving the causes to themselves, I could not without pity witness the condition of this gallant race of people, to whose British-like loftiness of character, the word pity is perhaps inapplicable. Let the reader not be surprised at this sentence of indirect panegyric. Had he felt as I did, seeing what I saw, in the character of this people—had he mingled with them, and witnessed, as I did, when the tragedy of Brutus was performed, by the youth of some of the first families in the city, the united shoutings of the people of all parties (every petty feud being forgotten) when the general freedom was alluded to, while the acclaimers were buried to the very chin, in the ashes and ruins caused by the exemplification of the stern virtue it inculcated, he would think with me, and would feel that, however party may tear them within, Spain can never again break their union—their

unchangeable determination to sacrifice every domestic antipathy to the great cause of liberty. Time will quell these domestic troubles; we shall one day see this people flourish in a state worthy their constancy of resistance and the heavy price they paid for freedom.

Should an inhabitant of Tucuman chance to peruse this hasty tribute to the virtue of his countrymen—should he, while so doing, charge me with having shrunk from the regard I professed for their interests, because my humble efforts to unite them with my own and with British industry failed of success, from circumstances which it was beyond my power to controul—he will not say that I withheld justice from them on the score of their invincible determination to be free from the dictation of their ancient tyrants. Alas! the British countenance, which all fondly and mutually expected to shine upon their country, and to operate as a lever in moving her energies, by raising her

hidden treasures, has been withheld. The germs of industry, which were expected to take root in her luxuriant soil, have not sprung up. My unavailing regret has mingled with their disappointment, the balance is thus even; and could I have my wish I should prefer, that the document which promised such fair and fertile hopes, might in fairness to me be destroyed, instead of being preserved as a seeming monument of reproach.

Farewell, delicious Tucuman, and hospitable Tucumaneses; farewell to your delightful plains, and mighty and romantic mountains. Though Englishmen are not to be your brothers in your country's bosom, there is one Englishman who will ever bear towards you the kindly feelings of a brother, and desire your prosperity and happiness.

On the 19th of August, I made preparations for quitting the city where I had been so pleasantly and successfully engaged. I took leave

of the governor and other authorities. A Tertullia given by the lady patroness of the ball, Donna Josefa, enabled me to pay my parting respects to the principal ladies of the place. On the following day, my setting out was retarded by the non-arrival of the capitaz, and peons, whose eyes, when they did arrive, plainly bespoke that they had not been losing much time in passing the farewell bottle. It was three o'clock in the afternoon before we found ourselves fairly under weigh. On crossing the Plaza we were suddenly intercepted by a cavalcade of our Tucumanese friends, who stopped us at the coffee-house, and there insisted upon cementing a bond of friendship and union, between our respective countries, with what Sir Walter Scott calls a stirrup glass. Mutual promises of friendship were exchanged. A strict adherence to every thing which could contribute to the interests of the company I represented was promised; and having drank our glasses to the

bottom, with mutual pledges, our warm-hearted friends insisted, as a species of honorary escort, that they might accompany us a short way from the city. They proceeded about a league with us, a proof itself of the progress we had made in their good graces, of their kind conduct to strangers, and of the estimation in which they held our friendship. This party consisted of the first society in the city, and we of course felt highly flattered by their unlooked-for attention.

This day, August 21st, we proceeded three leagues, and then halted for the night in the open field, preferring the free circulation of air, to an apartment which the owner of an Estacia offered to divide with us; the rich pasturage here affording good forage for our horses. Our party consisted of a substitute* for our preceding companion, who had gone to Jujuy, with the addition of Mr. Scott, a gen-

* Mr. George Brown.

tleman of eminent mineralogical attainments, of whose services I had availed myself to proceed to Potosi, and return with a sufficient number of miners to commence operations, under the contract I had lately concluded at Tucuman.

This evening's bivouac brought us better acquainted with each other than a month's residence in the city would have done. There is something far more approximating in an intercourse formed without the appliances of social life, and where luxuries and refinement are wanting, than in the circles of fashion and art. Half an hour in our present circumstances, was enough to convince me, that my new fellow traveller, Mr. Brown, was just such a man as one would select from a thousand. We talked of England, and of friends and attachments in various parts of London and the country, between whom and ourselves the convexity of half a world intervened, and to whom some of

the constellations which glittered with unequalled brilliancy over our heads, were never visible. In conversation and society, the hours stolen from repose beneath the glorious canopy of such a fine climate could not be tedious. The very air brought us spirits, the cool air of the night, and we detailed and listened to each other's conversation, and the favourite topics of each—the distant friends of each other, our hopes, and fears, and regrets—with a zest to which our nocturnal glass could scarcely add a stimulus. How magnificent was the place of our toast-giving, as on the salubrious plains of Tucuman, and on the threshold of the eternal Andes, we drank, Saturday night, "sweethearts and wives," "king, country, and friends!" We forgot not our Tucumanese acquaintance in our romantic resting place. Around a large fire, the stars shining with astonishing beauty, such as is never witnessed in our northern latitude, were our Gaucho retinue, enjoying

their aguardiente, drinking "Viva la Patria," and "El Rey de Ingleterra," with boisterous satisfaction; their forms defined by the fire-light, half of deep red, and half in dark shadow—it was a most delightful evening. Surely there is something in this climate that makes one enjoy even trifles with tenfold relish. Four hours sleep in the open air in this way is more refreshing than eight in a hot English bed.

It was one in the morning before the interesting conversation in which we were engaged concluded, and we became as still and insensible as the plain surrounding us. A call to get up we did not need, our

> ——————————— sleep
> Was airy light from pure digestion bred,
> And temperate vapours bland, which th' only sound
> Of leaves and foaming rills, Aurora's fan,
> Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
> Of birds on every bough.
>
> MILTON.

The song of the birds awoke us. A little time

was consumed ere we got our equipage in order. The preliminaries of tea and a cigar occupied a little more, which was consumed in cracking jokes and in such exhilarating conversation as the well garnished breakfast table of England very rarely inspires.

As a traveller, in "my wanderings," and they have been pretty extensive over many parts of the globe, I never witnessed such charmingly diversified scenery as that presented this day. It was like certain natural Elysian spots in Van Dieman's Land, more than any others that I have seen; indeed I know not which I should soonest prefer; in some places it bore the aspect of a nobleman's park, though perfectly wild and unartificial; and to this alone, among works of art, will it admit of a comparison. This scenery continued nearly to Bipos o'Ticucho, where we arrived early, it being about thirteen leagues from Tucuman. We here felt something of that sensation of independence

of society and locality, which the King of the Beggars, Bamfylde Carew, preferred to the ceremonies of fashion, or the luxuries of the "flaunting town." In short we were full of the desire to be pleasant and pleased, and we consequently succeeded in realising our wishes—a result that would oftener follow the same precedent could we more generally establish it.

Our position was an excellent one for the "arrieros." It supplied three materials in abundance, cost free, which comprehended almost all we needed—wood, water, and excellent grass. Our saddles and harness were speedily taken off the beasts; they shook themselves, and galloping to the stream as to an old acquaintance, they drank and trotted back to the rich pasture, which they rolled on in luxurious enjoyment before they began to feed. For ourselves, a trunk served us for a table. We had plenty, not luxury, to spread upon it; and again the glorious night came on "spangled with stars,"

and hours passed pleasantly away at our open inn, where no bell was heard, waiter bowed, or grave landlord sent in a bill for us to adjust before departure. Commend me to these pleasant bivouacs, before all the inns in the world, where the climate is matchless like this.

The climate and temperature of Tucuman in July were much like those of our April. The alternations of heat and cold varied as the polar winds more or less prevailed. The winter "temporales," or snow-storms on the mountains, their white tops showed at times to be unusually severe, and the cold blasts from these in addition often rendered the use of a fire in the day not disagreeable to a native, though unnecessary to an English constitution. When I left the city on the 20th of August, the brazeros,* the substitutes for a chimney fire in this country, were

* Chafing dishes, used in South America, as in some parts of Europe, enclosed in a wicker basket, turned bottom upwards, on which the ladies rest their feet.

giving up, and the shawls of the ladies, and the cloaks of the gentlemen, were yielding place to lighter garments.

According to Mr. Scott, the level of the plain of Tucuman is very little above that of the pampas of Buenos Ayres. The barometer, on the Travesia of Ambergasti, forty leagues from Anconquiqua, he informed me was twenty-nine and a half, being much the same with its indication at San Ysidro, five leagues from Buenos Ayres. The extreme elevation of the highest mountain of Anconquiqua, namely, the Nevado of that range, is 14,488 feet above the level of the sea.

Of animals of prey, and reptiles, we met with none to molest us; besides the jaguar the alligator is spoken of; but I take it to be that innocent species of lizard called the guana: of venomous reptiles we neither saw nor heard of any existing; had these been common it is probable we should have met with something of the kind, having passed so much of our time in the

open air by day and night in the forests, by rivers and springs. The anta, armadillo, wild-cat, weazle, and animals of a like kind, are frequently met with. Bull-frogs (singing toads as they call them) begin their music at night fall to charm the endless variety of moor fowl in marshy spots; while armies of ants cover the uncultivated parts of the plains. As to the feathered tribe, in variety of species and beauty of plumage they are no where surpassed, and the song of many of them is highly novel and pleasing.

On the 22d we continued our journey, the appearance of the country being still the same. It was a land smiling in the pride of nature's beauty, and wanting only the hand of man to make it produce a hundred fold. Man, however, has no hold here where he may find such prolific returns for his labour; his voice is not heard where there exist boundless resources for his industry to improve, and they seem made to perish almost without his casual observation. The

population of this province is nothing to its fertility and extent. The scanty number of human beings we encountered here and there on the roads, complained of their poverty—and with reason, if the miserable character of their habitations were to be the criterion for judging of it, either externally, or by their internal meanness, and want of every thing approaching comfort.

We arrived about dusk at the town of Trancas, which owes its origin to a considerable mountain stream washing its walls. On our arrival we were waited upon by the governor and cabildo, and congratulated, after the custom of persons travelling under the patronage of the supreme authorities. In consequence the governor offered us his sala for our night's accommodation. In return for this we gave a tertulla the same evening, in compliment to his lady and her friends. Our party being now pretty well versed in the manners and dances of the country, we figured tolerably well at the

mariquita and montenero, and the hours seemed to pass away pleasantly enough to these provincials. The total sum for making this town happy for an evening, adding ourselves, horses, peons, entertainments, and breakfasts in the morning, in short every charge, was eight dollars!—"Blush, grandeur, blush!"

I was struck with the change produced here arising from an observation of one of the members of the cabildo, an elderly man. He said that until lately an Englishman would pass through this town utterly disregarded, if he escaped being molested, so great had been the hatred of the people to foreigners, which hatred was cherished by the influence of the friars and godos. In the morning the governor accompanied us to the spot by the river side, where at the head of a guard he met and shot the ex-governor of Tucuman, Don Barnaby Araoz, giving him only time to confess himself. He spoke of the action as laudable, inasmuch as he had disposed of another

tyrant. To a question whether it was not more consonant with justice to have brought him to trial first, he replied, that the delinquent was too dangerous a person to exist a moment. He was, of himself, a pest of mischief—a man of such genius and resources, that had he reached Tucuman, his presence would have been the signal for a counter-revolution. He had caused the blood of the province to flow profusely, and more than a hundred such lives as his would not atone for the blood he had shed. He offered 3000 dollars to preserve his life; but he was told if he offered 10,000 it would be in vain. Upon this he made up his mind to meet his fate boldly, and he acted up to his resolution. His last act was to smoke a paper cigar, from which, when nearly consumed, he coolly knocked the ashes with his finger, philosophically saying, "Human existence is but as these ashes!" and then undauntedly submitted to his doom.

There are considerable sand hills about Trancas, very barren in appearance, but the

valley itself is rich and fertile. The place has but a scanty population, perhaps a hundred houses inhabited.

On the 23d of August we crossed the Rio Tala, the boundary of the two provinces. The road from Trancas was covered with sand, but it was better than on the other side towards Tucuman. The country from hence all the way to Salta is very slightly sprinkled with population, and many things are not to be procured on the road, or for above fifty-six leagues Our route lay through a jungle, unblest with one human countenance, even of the most abject description. We could get no intelligence as to the cause of a deficiency of water we observed in the bed of the Rio Tala; we conjectured, that the water had forced a new passage for itself elsewhere, for the mountain torrents are great, and this once formidable river we found a mere brook.

In the neighbourhood of the Tala we ob-

served many alkaline plants, and considerable saline incrustations. We suspected, therefore, that the water might be salt, but on trying it we found it fresh and pure. The natives of the neighbourhood, such as they are, have not troubled themselves to examine beneath the surface, where I have no doubt there are beds of salt in deposit, a valuable accession to the natural wealth of the country, yet unexplored. After travelling thirteen leagues, we reached the Estancia of a gentleman who had cut a figure in the revolution, a great and sincere patriot, although an old Spaniard. Here, at the recommendation of Dr. Redhead, of Salta, we were most kindly received. The name of the Doctor's friend was Don Domingo Puche, and we were indeed much beholden to his hospitality. It would have been sufficient, however, had he known we were Englishmen, for no other introduction is necessary under the roof of this venerable Biscayan, as the following

anecdote, which I heard of him, satisfactorily proves.

Two or three natives of Great Britain were passing on the road to Potosi, but a short time before I arrived at Don Puche's residence, who chanced to mistake his house for one of accommodation for travellers, and they made very free with the excellent cheer it afforded, as they of course expected to pay for what they got; in short they treated the place as they would a country inn at home. They called for the best of every thing, and invited their host to partake of the banquet. The next morning they expected their bill, when the old patriot Biscayan informed them that his house was not a pulpero, that they were mistaken in the character of the place at which they had taken up their quarters, and far from receiving any thing from them, he sent them forward towards Salta, gratis, with his own horses.

Our host was father-in-law to the celebrated

General Guemes, the brave defender of Salta against the royalist forces of Upper Peru. The death of that brave officer, and about the same time the loss of his wife, who was much endeared to him as well as to the country round, gave a melancholy turn to Don Puche's disposition, which is deeply lamented by his friends and retainers, who tremble for the result: Except when aroused or excited by some circumstance, such as our arrival, which, in his isolated neighbourhood, was an event of importance, he seems in a degree lost to those about him, his domestic establishment and his large agricultural and other concerns experiencing material neglect.

Our fare at the hospitable table of Don Domingo Puche may be worth noting. It was abundant, and among other good things there was a dish of the armadillo, than which nothing could be more rich and savoury eating. We had frequently observed these mailed rats running

about the country; but, as is the case with the Biscachos, from being too abundant the peons and persons of that class set no value upon them. Hence it was that we missed the most delicious kind of diet to be met with on the road in this part of South America. From the mode, however, of making these animals available for food, we were pleased they had not before come in our way. Not aldermen in our appetites, of the whipping a pig to death, enlarging a goose's liver *à la perigord*, or of frying fish alive, after the cockney mode for a Sunday's dinner, we were, are, and ever shall be guiltless—a lobster's lingering agony, we would spare, and we are vulgar enough to confess we could not distinguish the difference between the animal put out of pain at once, and the inquisition old high-treason-like method of inflicting as much agony as possible in a given time, under the imaginary notion of improving the taste of a dish. The unfortunate armadillo,

as is well known to naturalists, rolls himself into a ball within his armour, which no knife will penetrate. In form like the common woodlouse, but of course an animal in size, and adopting the same mode of defence as the hedgehog, without his formidable spines, he remains immovable, and thus baffles his foes. Men alone have a cruel stratagem in reserve for him. He is placed, armour and all, upon the fire, his armour forming the dish in which he is roasted alive, a martyr to a biped's appetite.

On the 24th we parted from Don Domingo, who refused all remuneration for the bustle and trouble he had been put to on our account. I say bustle, because during the conversation of the previous evening with the ladies of the house, a violent scream drew our attention, and on going to the spot whence it proceeded, with a candle, we were surprised to find our mineralogist had strayed into an adjoining room in the dark, and frightened an old grandam

negress, who lay there almost breathing her last, out of the little life she had remaining in her. This woman was an old and faithful domestic, who had had the apartment allotted her to pass her last years in, and make her peace with Heaven, a kindness common towards slaves among the people here. We gave our friend a recommendation not in future to carry on his scientific researches in the dark.

Our next day's journey lay through a mellow country, with an abundance of intersecting streams. The forests seemed to increase in extent and luxuriance of growth, as they did near Tucuman, whenever we touched upon the commencement of the mountain ascents: a singular circumstance when the plains appeared so much better fitted by depth and richness of soil to nourish them more effectively. The timber up the mountain sides, as far as what may be styled the herbaceous limits, or where trees usually cease to grow, Don Domingo informed us, was

as large and as fine as I had seen near Tucuman, We posted twelve leagues, and put up for the night, after crossing the Rio Rosario, which is small, rapid, and stony, at the Estancia Metan. The roads were not very good in this day's route, and a continued ascent and descent.

This Estancia was owned by Don Ignacio Sierra, and he treated us with kindness and attention. We bargained for horses here for the remainder of our journey to Salta, about fifty leagues distance. On our leaving the vehicle our head peon informed us that the excellent Don Domingo had slyly stowed away in the carriage a large cheese, a quantity of excellent charque, a ham, and some sweetmeats. This is a proof of his hospitality and goodness of heart to British strangers. The cheese was as large as one of our Cheshire cheeses, and in flavour and quality resembled Stilton; the ham was fine but not cured as well as a Yorkshire. We also found a stone bottle of milk, another

concealed gift from this kind Spaniard, who truly loved to do good by stealth, but it had changed itself almost to butter from the motion of the carriage.

The servants of the estancias, dependent upon their lord for subsistence, are the most cheerful and happy of the inhabitants of this country. It is not a little remarkable, that wherever the old Spaniard, who is almost invariably the Biscayan, or *Scotchman*, of Spain, has contrived (by suppleness of political conduct, or from conviction of supporting the right cause) to suit his politics to the change of circumstances brought about by the revolution, a species of order and comfort reigns around and below him, totally at variance with the habits of the proprietors and people of the estates, which have been carved out for the possessors by the late political changes or by the sword.

On the 25th the morning dawned cheerfully, and we availed ourselves of the offer of a

couple of his nags from our host, which afforded two of our number a little change in the mode of travelling, as well as exercise. Our road, nearly the whole way, lay through a romantic wood, about six leagues in extent. We passed the Rio Conchas. The scenery was mountainous around us. Before reaching Las Piedras we crossed the river of that name, which rolls over a stony bed. The rivers here are small, and, excepting at particular seasons, easily crossed. We stopped at the post-house of Piedritas. This house is much the same in character as the others on the route; it is situated on an eminence overlooking the river, and a cross is erected just by, to the memory of a young gentleman of Salta, called Nadal, who lost his life in fording it. I understood he was swept away by the rolling down of one of the ponderous stones which the torrent when swollen, drove before it, rushing, as all the streams do here, from the mountains, with terrific violence. It is like

the opening of a mighty flood-gate; if a footing be once lost in the rapid when crossing, there is little chance of salvation for the traveller. The river boils, and foams, and rages on between masses of rock, carried down by floods from the mountains, and seems to get more angry as it proceeds. The dashing water, the solitary post, and the commemorative cross, impressed me with a melancholy which seemed to belong exclusively to this site and the surrounding scenery.

The country was very similar in character to what we had before seen, on leaving Piedritas upon the morning of the 26th. The mountains, which are of a blue, slaty, argillaceous cast, seemed to increase in elevation as we proceeded, and to be half in the heavens. For twenty-six leagues from Piedritas not a peopled habitation is to be seen. The traveller, therefore, must take care to provide himself with necessaries here. For eighteen leagues the road is very

bad, passing amid hills, always ascending and descending. Four leagues from Piedritas there is a forsaken dwelling, which travellers may occupy. We forded the rivers Blanco and Passages; the latter is about two hundred feet wide; when the waters are low it is shallow and easy to pass. It is necessary to take water from this river, as for the next fifteen leagues none is to be obtained. The character of all these mountain torrents is very similar, and they all of them pour their tributary offerings into the copious Parana.

This day we proceeded sixteen leagues, and lodged at night in the open air by a huge blazing fire, in what they style here a desert, because distant from the rivers before-mentioned, though it is, what any where else would be called a luxuriant country, being covered with wood, and the soil a rich yellow clay, in which water might easily be obtained by digging; this is an operation, however, which the

natives have no idea of troubling themselves with. The next day we started in the grey of the morning, and reached Cobos to breakfast, which is nine or ten leagues from Salta. It is a wretched place, with only six or seven houses as miserable as their inmates. The road from Cobos to within three leagues of Salta is very bad, and rough, from ruts and loose stones, with many small hills to ascend and go down. After travelling seven leagues we reached Lagunillas, a post-house so called from its situation between two lakes, on which we observed an immense quantity of wild fowl. Here we got pretty good accommodation, and were visited in the evening by a group of females from a village, who entertained us with singing and guitar playing.

The owner of this property, consisting of more than a thousand acres, said he would dispose of it for a few hundred dollars. It seemed well stocked, especially with sheep and

goats. The gambling disposition of the people always keeps them in a state of indigence, and they are without a single dollar in store for a rainy day. The situation of this post, with its vicinity to Salta, on a fine plain, ranging up to the highlands, offers an opportunity to any industrious Englishman with a small capital to make a handsome fortune in a few years. Its easy distance from the city, romantic situation, and general capabilities for the establishment of an inn or tea garden, upon the British plan, warrant such a conclusion.

The road from Lagunillas to Salta is along the base of a range of eminences, clothed to the very tops with trees of endless variety. The summits, more particularly, appeared from below to be crowned with white roses. It cost us some considerable time and trouble to force a passage to the elevation whereon these magnificent flowers were growing; when, instead of roses, we discovered them to be so many immense flowers or

balls of the mountain cotton tree. This tree is called by the natives, the "Yuchan," also "Algadon del monte," and the produce is used for stuffing their pillows, couches, &c. In size the flower of the mountain cotton tree is at least six times that of the real cotton shrub.

CHAPTER VIII.

Arrival at Salta—The monopolists—Mining propositions—Monument near Salta—Debate in the Sala—Religious mummery—Madame Oleñata—General Oleñata—His death—Certificate of an old Spaniard respecting the Population—Population of Salta—Products of the Province—Traffic—Climate—The Miners, and state of the Mines—Necessity of foreign aid to recover the Country.

We found on our arrival a house in Salta prepared for our reception at the instance of Dr. Redhead, a fellow countryman, resident there. After our introduction to this gentleman, and after partaking of an excellent breakfast, prepared for us in the charming family of Garruchaga, we visited the individuals to whom we had letters of introduction; and in the evening

waited upon the governor *ad interim*. General Aranales, the governor in chief, being absent on an excursion to Tarija, the frontier town of the province, where he was endeavouring to make up some disagreements which had occurred among the people, a chasseur was sent off to him with the news of our arrival.

On the 29th, we were occupied in receiving company, and conferring with Dr. Redhead upon the object of my mission. The monopolists, to which body I have before alluded, had been endeavouring to secure this province to themselves, by means of an exclusive privilege, upon the plan of that of Famatina. The previous arrival of my advices, and the suggestions of Dr. Redhead, operated to make the government delay the proceedings for this grant, in order that the pretensions of the various competitors might be fairly examined and settled in the sala. Among other visitors this day, Don Theodore Bustamente, the provisional governor,

honoured us with his return call, as did Major Aranales, the governor's son.

On the 30th, many of the members of the sala and cabildo, visited us. I entered upon business also with Don Moriano Gainza, a person whom I had secured as agent while passing through Cordova on his way to Attacama. I had commissioned him, in order not to lose time, to contract for the celebrated mines of Huantajaya, one of the principal objects of my mission. He gave me satisfactory documents of this negociation, which aftewards became nugatory, from a previous promise of the mines to another party, which party had at length contracted to work them. His demand for expences was one hundred and thirty-four dollars. Thus the hopes of the company, for which I acted, terminated in that quarter at a much less expense than they could have done had any other mode of proceeding been adopted. The principal expence incurred, was for his charges

after his arrival at Tarapaco, for his mules to Huantajaya.

On the 31st, I found, from conferences with several members of the sala, that the people of Salta took a lively interest in the question on which I came, and they were much pleased at the idea of opening their country to foreigners. They debated on the most effective measure for their encouragement, namely, the annulling all existing impediments arising out of the old laws—*ordinanza de mineria.* These were chiefly the royal dues of Quinto y Cobo, eleven and a half per cent, others of four per cent, and also duties of export amounting to nearly one third of the produce of the mines. It was proposed to invite emigration from Great Britain, by grants of territory to any company which should fairly establish itself in the province. This day, Major Aranales called, with a letter, expressing his father's regret at being unavoidably absent at the period of our arrival. In the evening

we paid our respects to the ladies Aranales, and to those of other families of respectability in the city.

September 1st. I called upon Colonel Dorego the agent of the Buenos Ayres speculators, and also upon Don Jose Torres. I found that the pretensions of these gentlemen were supported by some persons of considerable influence, who interested themselves as shareholders in mining speculations. Circulars or agents were sent all over the country, to secure mines for this party, and it was evident that an organized system of monopoly was extending itself in every direction. To overcome this effectually was no easy task; or even to neutralize it. These speculators, if successful, would soon put an end to the mining interest of the British companies; for it is obvious, that having secured all the mines, simply for the purpose of re-selling them at any profit they might choose to affix, an end must be put to the working them by British capital;

thus the country could not be benefited, for the mines would remain idle. On the following day, therefore, availing myself of Dr. Redhead's co-operation, I had an interview with the governor, who requested information as to the objects of my mission, as far as respected the province of Salta. I told him, that I represented a company with a capital of a million, the views of which were directed more immediately to Chili and Peru. I said I had no decided instructions with respect to the United Provinces, but I entertained no doubt, that so fair a field for the employment of the large funds at the company's disposal, would not be rejected by it; especially if coupled with other advantages, such as those which the government seemed disposed to offer, as an encouragement to similar undertakings. The governor then urged me to make an immediate tender of such propositions, as I deemed essential to the interests of my company. To this I promised to accede,

as soon as the question pending in the sala, touching the admission or rejection of various competitors for exclusive mining privileges, should be promulgated ; until then it would of course be useless.

Don Theodore Bustamente observed, that every individual in the country, of the least intelligence, must be aware "how important" ("indispensable," exclaimed Dr. Redhead, interrupting him,) to the welfare and future prospects of the country, the aid of foreigners was. They would supply funds for promoting the arts, reviving the trade, and even increasing the population of the province, in short every thing. "There is amongst us," added the governor, "too much national spirit and good sense, to permit this fine country to be put up for a sum of money to the highest bidder. We look to the energies and mighty resources of Great Britain to retrieve our affairs; for the mutual advantage of both countries. This object

will be best secured by a union of interests, and by the establishment of real and not speculative associations."

In consequence of the foregoing conversation, I arranged some heads of propositions with Dr. Redhead, in case the monopolists should be defeated in the sala, the debate on the subject being fixed for the 5th of September.

I next wrote to General Miller, my old acquaintance, and now governor of Potosi, and informed him of my arrival at Salta on my way thither, and also of the views of the company as respected mining operations in Peru. By this step I hoped to arrest the progress of the monopolists in that direction.

On Sunday, the 4th of September, I attended the Misa de Gracia, and afterwards went about a league from the town, with Dr. Redhead and Mr. Brown, to see the monument erected on the plain of Salta to commemorate the defeat of

the Spanish generals, Goyeneche and Tristan in 1812.

This monument is built of burnt brick, like the houses of the town of Salta. There is no inscription, for the South Americans are not given to monumental inscriptions, even upon tombstones, either from deficiency in literary knowledge or want of artists. Indeed, except in Buenos Ayres, there is not a solitary tombstone to be met with any where. No hewn stone is to be seen in the whole province of Salta. Brick is used on account of the heavy rains, which, during the season, would wash away "adobe," or mud-built dwellings, such as are found in other provinces.

On the 5th, being the day appointed for the discussion in the sala on the question of exclusive privilege, I attended the debate. The propositions of various agents were read, and the merits of the different offers discussed. The members of the sala, who were really desirous

of consulting the public welfare, and yet urged to support their friends, were placed in an awkward dilemma. A collision of opinions took place fatal to all. The unbiassed members advocated open competition against those who were governed by interest, and the latter offered to divide the province and settle the question that way. At this juncture, Dr. Redhead delivered a note from myself addressed to the sala, which occasioned an adjournment and the final overthrow of the views of the monopolists in Salta.

I was waited upon about this time by an individual who was known to possess considerable weight in Salta, and who offered me a share in the good things which some of the monopolists had procured. I declined any such offer, on the ground of my instructions not being to purchase mines, but to work them at a per centage. These monopolists pretended they had expended large sums of money in exploring

and "denouncing" mines, and expected 80 or 100,000 dollars for a right which did not cost them a thousand. I saw through all this artifice of the Buenos Ayrian speculators. I admitted the richness of the samples of ore produced, but stopped further offers by urging my want of authority.

On the 9th of September I was prevented from attending to business on account of its being the fête of *Nuestra Señora*, or "our Lady." This was a ridiculous piece of idleness in commemoration of a miracle performed by the lady patroness of Salta, who, during the shock of an earthquake, about a century and a half ago, (earthquakes are not common here) descended in the most obliging way from her niche in the cathedral, and approaching the altar, interposed in behalf of the inhabitants, and delivered them from all danger. For this piece of service the people of Salta are placed annually under a contribution of nine days "functiones," or

thanksgivings. The men laugh at the mummery, but the women still pretend to have faith in this ancient miracle. The chief day of thanksgiving was on the 11th, when the cathedral was so filled with the crowds that prostrated themselves in gratitude for the Señora's marvellous goodness, that I could scarcely squeeze myself into standing room beneath the portico of the great entrance. Again I could not help noticing the apparently sincere religious feeling of the women of all ranks, which this idolatrous exhibition had summoned together, especially if contrasted with the conduct of our sex on the same occasion. The men, except the aged, who had imbibed little perhaps of modern innovation, and grown into years, with their belief and conduct strengthened by the remembrance of youthful associations, were evidently insincere on the occasion, at least as much so as I had observed the Cordoveses of our sex to be. They seemed

present simply to afford their countenance to the ceremony, with the same indifference that one man shakes hands with another, of whom he knows little and cares less. This want of feeling is not to be wondered at. It is a matter of astonishment, not less than regret, to see intelligent beings—really superior men as to mind, mingling with the ignorant vulgar in superstition, before a glittering tawdry image, the most ridiculous of all things to which to address supplications. Now the spangled image is elevated in the church; now taken out an airing, with an infant doll in her arms, a glory of gems about its head. Our lady of Salta thus awes some of the finest forms and sweetest faces in the world; stops the current of business, encouraging laziness, and puts the people under a long devotional contribution, relieved, however, between the acts of the farce, by balls and sly diversions, permitted by the artful priests, to make the whole palatable.

During these holidays, I should have suffered much from ennui, but I accepted an offer of accompanying a friend into the country.

On the 15th, in company with Dr. Redhead, I opened a negociation with the widow of the late General Olañeta, for the mineral rights of Cheromo near Tupiza, with every prospect of success, and began preparations for journeying to Jujuy. I examined a troop of mules, and selected the requisite number for my journey to Potosi, and thence to Arica. The carriage I left at Salta with Dr. Redhead, as we were now to go over roads scarcely passable for mules. The price of mules, was from eleven to thirty-four dollars each, according to their understood qualities, as carga and saddle mules. The mules of San Juan are accounted the best, being bred among the mountains, and consequently more hardy. Some of the San Juan mules fetch from one hundred to three hundred

dollars, when very superior in ease of pace, stamina, and beauty.

On Sunday, September 18th, I took my leave of my friends in Salta. Several of the members of the sala, the governor, and others seemed surprised at my sudden departure, as they deemed it; but I told them it was the English habit to effect business with promptitude, and that time with me was of too great importance to lose any. My adieu to Madame Olañeta I shall not forget. She was about thirty years of age, with features handsome rather than beautiful, great elegance of form, and the most captivating graces of manner, for which indeed the ladies of Salta are remarkable. These qualities in Madame Olañeta were heightened by an air of dejection in her countenance, corresponding with the widow's weeds which she wore, and with her present circumstances. Solitude had increased the melancholy of her feelings, and yet her natural sweetness and kind-

ness of heart were visible through all. She reminded me of a fair flower that had been removed from the sunshine to the shade; its colours saddened, yet its beauty and odour still unchanged, while its situation out of its place renders it an object of more than usual interest. The hero of Ayacucho, General Sucre, had carefully protected this lady from the effects of the anarchy and confusion consequent upon the downfall of her husband in the affair of Surmurlas near Tupiza, when he fell in a revolt of his own troops. She possesses great courage, but not enough to trespass upon those feminine accomplishments and graces for which she is so distinguishable. She is well bred, affable, and engaging in manner, qualities intermingled with her dejection, that lay instantaneous hold on the feelings of those who see her for the first time, which it seems difficult to overcome.

The adherence of Olañeta to the cause of

Ferdinand, which terminated but with his life, is spoken of by his foes in terms of admiration truly honourable to his memory. Unfortunately his name is tarnished, like that of Morillo and others of the commanders of the troops of old Spain, with acts of aggression and cruelty that disgraced the royal cause. The lofty spirit of Madame Olañeta consoled her husband to the last moment of life. She attended him in his successes, and was a ministering angel in his adversity. Some appear to hope that "Ferdinand the Beloved" will not be unmindful of her losses and those of her children, for in his cause nearly their all is consumed. Alas! how shadowy is hope from such a quarter!

I will just add here, that Don Pedro Antonio de Olañeta was born June 29th 1777, in Elgueta, in the province of Biscay. He went to South America at twelve years of age, and entered the army as a commander of

riflemen, under General Goyeneche. His interest and resources, as chief proprietor of the rich mine of Cheromo, made his co-operation of importance to the king's cause. He distinguished himself in the affair of Ayouma under the late vice king Pezuela, then general-in-chief. He was promoted to a colonelcy, and subsequently to be a brigadier-general, for his conduct at Wiloma, near Cochabamba, in defeating the last attempt of the Portenos or Buenos Ayreans to subdue Upper Peru. After the battle of Ayacucho, he seems to have acted with great uncertainty, which terminated in his death. At one time he opened a correspondence with General Sucre, and had an opportunity of saving himself and his property, through the generosity of that distinguished patriot officer, nor would he have compromised his honour in so acting, or injured his master's cause, which was become utterly hopeless. Independently of Sucre's army, a considerable force was advancing upon him

from Salta, and other parts of the united provinces: nor can there be any other reason assigned for his conduct except that, old Spaniard like, he conceived a miracle would extricate him, or that, at last, he might fall back and capitulate upon honourable terms with General Aranales, at Salta. His troops, however, viewed the affair in a different light. They saw not a hope was left; and the second in command, Colonel Medina Cœli, after a vain remonstrance, turned his arms against his general. Olañeta, with a few faithful followers, fought to the last, and being wounded about four o'clock in the afternoon of the 30th of March, died at five the following morning. With him perished the hopes of the Godos in Upper Peru.

Before proceeding with my journal or narrative, or one or both, I will just record what I remember of the province of Salta, of which Tarija is reckoned the northern frontier, and Tucuman the southern. Its length may be

about one hundred and thirty leagues. Its breadth has never been determined. All that the people of Salta know is that the Rio Vermejo is their natural eastern, and Atacama their almost trackless western boundary.

The geographical position of Salta, under the parallels of twenty and twenty-five degrees of south latitude, with its centre cutting the meridian of sixty-four west longitude, is naturally placed in the lap of exuberant nature. No adequate idea can be formed of the variety of the soil and climate of this province, without due reference to the different elevations of its varied regions. It comprehends all from the climate of perpetual snow to that of tropical warmth. Nothing can be more erroneous than the notions formed about the degree of heat to be sustained in a country like this, where it is not at all uniform, but dependant upon site. A short journey will afford any given temperature that can be desired by the settler. In plains on the sea level the

settler may live in a temperature of eighty, or ninety, or he may choose any milder level of table land or lofty plains, from fifty to sixty or seventy of Fahrenheit. He may take up his residence on slopes of mountains, where Lapland winter dwells, and see the produce of all temperatures lying below him—tropical, temperate, or frigid.

It was the policy of the old Spaniards to make the fertile and salubrious districts subservient to the wants of the sterile and mineral ones. It is worthy of remark, that in all their trans-atlantic possessions, they, like the Chinese, pretended that a most extraordinary degree of population, beyond the truth, existed, and they did this from the same motives as the Chinese, without doubt, namely, to deter foreigners from encroaching *(vi et armis)* upon their possessions. Hence arises the surprise of the traveller, at the discrepancy of his own and their statements, and the detection of the fictions they once employed. A

population of 250,000 Indians, and 120,000 whites, was assigned to Buenos Ayres, which has been lately shown to be in the aggregate but 163,000, according to Señor Nuñez. A similar reduction may therefore be made from their estimates of all the provinces. Thus the old Spanish estimate gives Salta a population of 50,000 souls, which Señor Nuñez has reduced to 40,000, viz. from 8 to 10,000 to the city of Salta and its suburbs. This loose computation of Nuñez differing a fifth part, reminds me of the goatherd, who said his flock was eight hundred or a thousand, but "quien sabe" which of the two sums was correct. Now, I had it from very good authority that the city contains not quite 7,000, Jujuy 3,500, and ten other minor places, rather hamlets than towns, about 400 souls each. It must be observed, however, that the Spanish settlements upon the eastern frontier, now left in the undisturbed enjoyment of the Matacas, and other Indian tribes, have

dwindled into nothing since the old census was made. Still is a difference of three-fourths to be accounted for, or that between 14,500 and 40,000. It cannot be ascribed to their long fifteen years struggle for independence alone; the truth is, that the total never approached the amount which the old Spaniards gave out to the world.

On the other side of the question, the following may account for a diminution of population. Salta, until very lately, if not still, is indebted to the southern provinces of the union, for articles of the commonest necessity, though abounding with the same productions. Possessing the finest timber in the world, in great abundance, and staple productions of vast variety, the people of Salta are tributary to Tucuman for their household furniture, and even for boards. With cotton indigenous they obtain even their candlewicks from Catamarca; to Santiago del Estero they owe their dyes and

wax; and to the remote states of San Juan and Rioja, their wine and brandy. The indigo plant grows wild here as well as at Tucuman, but no indigo is made. The *cactus*, or cochineal plant, of the very best quality, called the opuntia, grows, but is not used. It is only of late years, since the destruction of the mule trade, that sugar has been made on a few of the estates. From lack of economy in the process, and want of labourers, they must still submit to pay from five to six dollars an *arroba* (twenty-five lbs weight,) for the crushed sugars of Havannah or Brazil. Even for the common earthen utensils of the kitchen, they are indebted to the annual return of the Matacas Indians, to fabricate and replenish their cooking apparatus, before they can ensure themselves dinners for the remnant of the year.

The high-minded people of Salta have been accused of indolence, and what I have said above may not be thought to lessen the truth

of the charge. It must be known, however, that before the late war their mule trade with Peru was sufficient to absorb, with its attendant traffic, the attention and labour of all the inhabitants. Señor Nuñez rates this traffic at sixty or eighty thousand head, exported to the towns and villages of Upper and Lower Peru, annually; besides the halting droves sent for the same traffic from Santa Fè, Cordova, San Juan, &c. Nuñez has also stated, and truly, that the people of Salta "being in the vanguard of the war of independence, unremittingly carried on by the Spaniards from Upper Peru, at one time in endeavouring to recover their sway in the United Provinces, and at another to provide themselves by way of pillage with every necessary for their towns and villages;" and also being remarkable "for the great valour with which they constantly opposed the efforts of the royalists during fifteen years;" that from these causes "Salta has been a continual,

field of war, and it may be safely asserted that nothing but the importance of its natural advantages, could have prevented its entire disappearance from the list of the United Provinces."

The foregoing author records, "that the climate of Salta is very temperate for its situation, being under the tropic. Many branches of mountains forming the great ridge of the Andes extend into the provinces, and between them are numerous deep and fertile vallies, well watered, both with rivers and springs of great purity. Timber of all kinds flourishes in perfection, and every natural production is given out in profusion. Gold and silver veins exist in abundance. There are also copper veins varying in quality, sulphur, alum, vitriol, and signs of tin and quicksilver. The soil is amazingly prolific. The state contains establishments for cattle breeding and grazing, of considerable extent. Señor Nuñez observes, "That it possesses the first materials of the three kingdoms, animal, vegetable, and

mineral, and the good conduct of its inhabitants makes it worthy of being the abode of industry."

It would require more room than a volume devoted to the purpose would afford, to go into the detail of the bounties which Providence has lavished on this fine country, or to speak figuratively, this earthly paradise. Tucuman has been called the garden, and Salta may be styled the park, plantation, and nursery ground of the Union. I cannot help regretting that this magnificent country is not to have the example of British industry, to quicken it into prosperity and moral life. It is impossible to compute what this province might be made, with a portion of the exuberant population of England. What a mutual benefit would accrue, by uniting in bonds of reciprocal amity, the relations of the two states, and by a fair exchange of products, enriching our country with that wealth for which Spain so long sacrificed her morals, her honor, and her humanity. I shall never cease, in common with

the inhabitants of this noble country, to cherish the hope that something of the kind may one day be effected. That under the wise, liberal, and enlightened administration of Mr. Canning, who proclaimed South American freedom, universally respected as his name is throughout the United Provinces of South America, we may sooner or later see a closer alliance in commercial relations and kind offices established; the indigenous products of one country, ministering to the exchange and the manufactures of the other, and competitors in both honorably running the race of profitable industry. The good will of the South Americans towards England is unbounded, but they as yet lack the power to show it more explicitly. Let us take advantage of these kindly feelings by a suitable return.

Does the merchant ask why his gains with the new world are diminishing instead of increasing?

The manufacturer, why there is so little demand for his goods in the market?

The ship-owner, why a hundred and fifty of the vessels having brooms at their mast-heads in the river, might not as well have been employed with the products of British industry in the Pacific?*

The answer is obvious. The exhausted South American is disappointed in his anticipated resources for re-establishing the medium of return payments in his staple of the precious metals. The war has depopulated his country, and more than all wrecked the capital he once possessed for keeping his mines open. He cannot (which is the fact) re-open them, neglected as they have been during a long and ruinous civil tumult, without adequate means: and he has no one but the foreigner to look to for assistance and the revival of his internal industry. Formerly Spain was the assistant, but all who left

* In March 1808 four British merchant flags only were flying in Valparaiso, and two Americans. In 1822 I counted sixty sail, two-thirds of which were British.

South America in the late troubles, carried off a portion of her wealth which she has not yet traffic to replace. Her mines are no bubbles: properly managed and carefully superintended, their returns would be certain; not, indeed, by senseless bull and bear schemes of stock exchange gambling, and expectations of rich returns almost before the mines can be opened, but by as careful a system of economy as is practised in Europe among persons accustomed to adventure in similar undertakings. The late bubbles of all kinds involved in their base character many schemes of sterling value to the country, which popular clamour equally attacked. As the rage for any thing good, bad, or indifferent, had been equally great, the censure was as indiscriminately sweeping. Thus we have let slip the most favourable opportunity of making South America contribute exclusively to our advantage.

We do not, it is true, equal the old Spaniards in what may be styled the practical part of

mining as adapted to the country. Custom we see must have given them this advantage, were it not otherwise very obvious. The frames of the South American miners are less susceptible of cold than the Cornish, their stomachs less squeamish, and their physical powers, in their own climate, very superior. But they who have opposed South American mining should have found sounder reasons than are given for the utter abandonment of such important objects of profit. They should inform the public where the poor native miner is to get his advances of money to raise his ores, and turn to account the fruits of his labour without external assistance. Unless he can do this, our manufactures will not get such a market in South America as was anticipated, for it is well known that the South Americans have comparatively little but bullion to give in exchange. Had our capitalists prudently set the mines going by frugal outlays for wages to the natives, and

a few clever mineralogists and superintending miners sent from Europe, our manufacturers, merchants, and ship-owners, would soon have experienced the benefits they sought.

How is the capital of the more opulent proprietors and "*habilitadores*"* in the principal mining districts (who were mostly old Spaniards ruined or banished) to be supplied? Upon this the main question of mining advantages hinges. Who is to re-establish those main springs of the old Spanish system, the public mints and banks of discount, called "*rescate*," which were sacrificed to carry on the war?

Speaking of Chili and Peru alone, it is my humble opinion, from more than one view of these fine countries, that had the chief branches of our commercial interest subscribed a million of money as "habilitadores," and gone soberly

* "Habilitadores" are persons who make advances to enable the miners to commence and carry on their operations according to the "ordinanza de mineria." These advances are not always in money, but in quicksilver, iron, steel, gunpowder, and similar articles.

and reasonably to work, and sent trusty agents only to protect their interests, they would have found in this mode of proceeding a much surer profit than by turning miners themselves. Nay, more, I contend that if such an amount had even been tendered as a free gift, it would have been returned with good interest to this country in a few years, either in "malt or meal." I trust I do not form my judgments hastily: I have seen much of trade and commerce in every part of the globe and in every climate. I was no novice, landing for the first time on the South American shore, to pioneer for a British Company, and return with a superficial glance at a few of the main objects of my mission. I gave them a rigid and impartial investigation, and state my conscientious opinions.

END OF VOL. I.

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